GameTime

The Buyer's Guide to Games

Supplement to *Comics Buyer's Guide* #1304

November 13, 1998

Great Games Gift Guide!

Inside:

Games you can take home to mom

Gateway games

What to get the gamer who has all the rules

We review:

- Clan War
- Deadlands: Hell on Earth
- Filthy Rich
- Mech Commander
- Star Trek: The Next Generation Role-Playing Game
- Trinity: Battleground
- Victory: The Blocks of War

And More!

GOT GAMES?

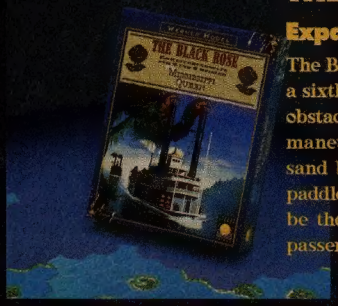
Perfect for an entertaining evening with friends or as holiday gifts, these award winning games will be a hit with the whole gang!

GAME OF THE YEAR, 1998 GAMES MAGAZINE! FOSSIL

Fossils are petrified witnesses to the stories of our past. But before those stories can be told, collectors must put together all of the pieces to reveal their secrets. The players are those collectors, each seeking to make a name for himself by collecting the most pieces of the puzzle. But not every fossil will be completed. Can you decide which ones are worth seeking and will bring you the most fame while keeping the pieces away from others? This is the perfect family game for the holiday season! Playable in under an hour by 2 to 6 players ages 10 and up. $29.95

100 BEST GAMES OF 1998, GAMES MAGAZINE! GAME OF THE YEAR (SPIEL DE JAHRES) FOR GERMANY, 1997 MISSISSIPPI QUEEN

Vie with other paddle-wheel captains and their "queens" for the title of Mississippi Queen, the fastest paddle-wheeler on Big Muddy. The competition is more than a mere race to the finish line. To win, a captain must be the first to dock at the finish and make two passenger stops along the way. As players use hexes to build the river as they race down it, the game board is new and exciting every time. Playable in 30 to 40 minutes by 2 to 5 players ages 10 and up. $39.95



THE BLACK ROSE

Expansion for Mississippi Queen

The Black Rose adds rules and the pieces for a sixth player along with a whole new set of obstacles and variants. Now players must maneuver through floating debris, avoid sand bars, dodge the "Black Rose," a pirate paddleboat with changing loyalties, and still be the first to dock at the finish with two passengers on board. $19.95

100 BEST GAMES OF 1998 GAMES MAGAZINE! MEDICI

Return to the trading days of the ancient Medici family, where ships sailed the Mediterranean looking for the most valuable spices, cloth and other commodities. Players bid on products, trying to successfully combine multiple strategies to come out with the most money at the end of the three rounds. This entertaining family game features artwork by fantasy artist David A. Cherry. Playable in under an hour by 3 to 6 players ages 10 and up. $29.95

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GREAT FINDS FOR HOLIDAY GIFT-GIVERS!

Satisfy all the Scrooges on your list with these entertaining light strategy games!

WINNER: GAME OF THE YEAR (SPIEL DE JAHRES) GERMANY, 1996
EL GRANDE

In 15th century Spain, the king's position is secure, but the Grandes (aristocrats and nobles) seek to expand their influence with the king. Thus, intrigue fills the courts and the country! The Grandes' primary weapons in this battle are the Caballeros. By carefully positioning Caballeros loyal to them, the Grandes can accumulate power in various regions of the country. Fencing, not with swords, but with cunning and deceit, makes this strategy game exciting and challenging. Playable in an 90 minutes by 2 to 5 players ages 12 and up. $39.95

EL CABALLERO

This sequel to El Grande is a complete game, not an expansion! Columbus has discovered the New World and the Grandes of Spain want in on the riches. Caballeros explore the islands of the Caribbean in search of power for their Grandes. For 2 to 4 players ages 12 and up. $19.95

EDISON & CO.

Inventors at the Edison Company have been searching for the vehicle design of the future. And with four zany prototype vehicles ready, the tests are about to begin! You and your partner influence these races, choosing which cars to move, which direction and how far. But other players have their own agendas and will be doing the same thing. The players that can get the vehicles they support to the valuable spaces at scoring time win. Playable in under an hour by 2 to 4 players ages 12 and up. $39.95

KATZENJAMMER BLUES

Be the coolest cat with the most mice by bidding on and booking the hottest blues bands at your club. When they aren't available, you can fill-in with joker musicians who play well with anyone, but can cost you mice in the end. A rummy style card game. 2-6 players aged 10 and up. $9.95.

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GameTime

The Buyer's Guide to Games

Issue #2 • November 13, 1998, supplement to *Comics Buyer's Guide*

Guidelines for giving games

Who will appreciate getting a game, and what kind of games should you get them? See **Page 14** for some tips and suggestions for giving the gift of fun.

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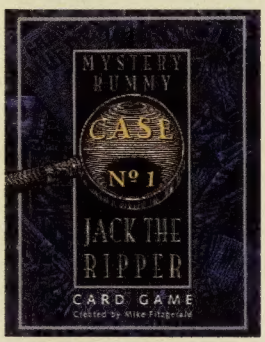

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My Turn

By Joyce Greenholdt

"Beware of Geeks Bearing Gifts" is the title of Phil Foglio's spiffy cartoon which lends our cover a bit of color this issue. And, while our cover is good for a laugh, it also illustrates what a wide variety of gift-giving possibilities the gaming hobby has to offer — not just during the holiday season, but all year round.

The key to giving someone a gift he or she will really appreciate is knowledge: What does the recipient like and, more important, what does he or she already have? This is even more important when selecting games as a gift, since exchanges can be a real problem — especially if you're buying a gift for someone who lives outside your area. For someone who lives in your area, of course, a gift certificate from the local game store works just fine, in a pinch.

In this issue, we review a bunch of games which might suit the taste of someone on your gift list this holiday season — and some which you might want to add to your own personal wish list. And our feature section gives some more, less specific, tips on things to consider when you're trying to find good games to give, whether or not your giftee is a gamer.

•

As I was sitting at my desk trying to think of witty editorial remarks to use here, the morning mail arrived in the form of preview copies of John Kovalic's *Dork Tower* #2 and #3. Through a major exercise of willpower, I limited myself to reading only one of the previews — the other will be my reward for finishing the issue. But the reason I'm telling you about this now is the bit of news that came along with the photocopies: *Dork Tower* #4, scheduled for March release, will include a game, "Escape from Dork Tower," by James Ernest of Cheapass Games. Bonus!

•

Looking to the future, one thing we'd like to add to *GameTime* as a regular feature is a Convention Calendar. If you are helping to organize a gaming convention, or if you know others who are, see that I'm sent the name of the convention, the dates and address it's being held, admission cost, and a phone number where people can get more information. That's: Joyce Greenholdt, *GameTime*, 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990. We'll list gaming conventions as far into the future as we can, starting with our next issue.

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And speaking of the next issue, I'm happy to say that *GameTime* will be a regular fixture in *Comics Buyer's Guide,* appearing as a quarterly supplement. *GameTime* #3 is scheduled for late January. You'll find it in *Comics Buyer's Guide* #1317, the Feb. 12 issue, as well as in selected game stores. Hope to see you here next year!

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November 13, 1998

Publisher: Mark Williams
Editor: Joyce Greenholdt
Associate Editors: Maggie Thompson
John Miller
Brent Frankenhoff
Ad Sales Reps: Kevin Novak
Meredith Miller
John Diser
Phone: (715) 445-2214
Fax: (715) 445-4087

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Join our winners

We celebrated our first issue with a gala prize drawing, and 20 lucky winners have been chosen to receive prizes from our game vault. They are: **Steven Boyd**, Clarksville, Va.; **James P. Curry**, Rochester, N.Y.; **Sheila J. Gross**, Piscataway, N.J.; **Mark Eaton**, Canberra, Australia; **Mark Harkins**, Libertyville, Ill.; **Michael Jackson**, Phoenix, Ariz.; **David Kapp**, Aurora, Colo.; **Brian Klein**, Deerfield, Ill.; **Frank Lloyd Jr.**, Richwood, W. Va.; **Mark Martin**, Memphis, Tenn.; **Jeff Metzner**, Exton, Pa.; **Jon A. Michal**, Park Ridge, Ill.; **David Netchin**, Skokie, Ill.; **Stephen Polasky**, Wauwatosa, Wis.; **L.E. Roberts**, Alexandria, Va.; **Cynthia Schaefer**, Wauwatosa, Wis.; **Michael Skidmore**, Chicago, Ill.; **Sharon Kay Stalter**, Phoenix, Ariz.; **Jim Sterrett**, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.; and **Joseph G. Veilleux**, Pittsfield, Maine.

Congratulations to all our winners — and keep those postcards coming for our *next* contest. Send your name, age, and mailing address to: *GameTime* Drawing #2, ATTN: Joyce Greenholdt, 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990. **Note:** Only one postcard per household.

"YOU HAVE ONLY BEGUN TO DISCOVER YOUR POWER."

- DARTH VADER

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GameTime Table Talk

Record Gen Con crowd tops 20,000

This year's Gen Con, held at the new Midwest Express Center in Milwaukee Aug. 6-9, attracted 20,377 people, setting a new record for the event, according to Andon Unlimited, which runs the show. Andon's computerized registration system allows it to track attendees as individuals, counting each person only once regardless of how many days he or she attends the show.

17-year-old wins *Magic* world championship

17-year-old Brian Selden of San Diego, Calif., won the 1998 *Magic: The Gathering* World Championship held in Seattle, Wash., Aug. 12-16. Selden secured a $34,000 purse along with the title.

In team competition, the American team beat the top-ranked French team in the finals. The four U.S. team members: Matt Linde, 17; Michael Long, 23; Bryce Currence, 22; and Jon Finkel, 20, received $22,000 in winnings.

A combined total of $250,000 was awarded in individual and team competitions. The final matches were covered by ESPN2, scheduled for broadcast Oct. 25 and 26 at 12:30 a.m. Eastern Time.

AEG sets sail for *7th Sea*

Designers at Alderac Entertainment Group are working on a new role-playing game, *7th Sea,* a world of swashbuckling and sorcery, pirates on the high seas, exploration, lost civilizations, secret societies, and intrigue. Release dates and other information have yet to be announced.

DemonBlade offers painted miniatures.

DemonBlade Games, which produces the *Shock Force* miniatures game, is offering a line of hand-painted *Shock Force* figures for people who lack the time, skill, or inclination to paint their own. Currently, one figure for each faction in the game is available prepainted. The painted figures are: The Bullet (from the Organization), Commandant II (Shock Force), Tech Shaman (Vengequan Indians), The Pure (Scarlet Brethren), Quickslink, The Favored (GothRats), Miss Triss (Mutants), and DeadTech Bandit (DeadTech Systems).

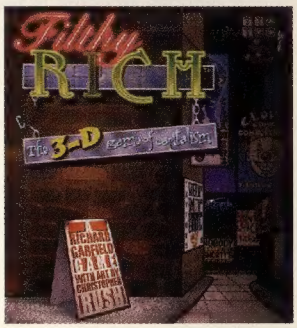
Holistic plans second *Fading Suns* computer game

Holistic Design Inc., the producer of the *Fading Suns* role-playing game and the *Emperor of the Fading Suns* computer game, announced in August that it had contracted with Ripcord Games, a division of Panasonic, to develop another *Fading Suns* computer game, tentatively titled *Fading Suns: Starship Diplomacy*. Slated for release next year, *Starship Diplomacy* will be a real-time strategy game featuring space combat, exploration options, and detailed diplomacy and economic systems.

Steven Jackson Games updates *Murphy's Rules* collection

Steve Jackson Games plans to release a new collection of the *Murphy's Rules* comic strip, which highlights the collisions between game rules and real life. Currently drawn by John Kovalic, the strip has featured several artists, including Pulitzer Prize-winner Ben Sargent, in its long run. The new collection will include the material published in the 1988 compilation of the strip, as well as all the new strips from the last decade. The $14.95 volume is scheduled for December release.

GameTime Critical Hits



Filthy Rich: The 3-D Game of Capitalism

Board game from Wizards of the Coast.
Cost: $24.99
Number of players: Two to five.
Designed for ages: 14 to adult.
Game length: 45 minutes.
Learning curve: Very easy to learn with only one page of rules.
Ease of play: Four-step turns keep play moving right along.
Strife factor: Players can be knocked out of the game early, but games are short enough to minimize frustration.

Reviewed by Joyce Greenholdt

Inspired by the sight of Hong Kong streets and alleys lined with business signs, *Magic: The Gathering* creator Richard Garfield designed the sort of deceptively simple game you'd expect from a mathematician.

The *Filthy Rich* box contains play money, three different types of playing cards, four 10-sided dice, one six-sided die, and the game board: a thin, illustrated three-ring binder containing four numbered nine-pocket plastic pages of the type used for storing trading cards (Ultra-Pro brand, in fact). The rules themselves are printed on the inside cover of the binder in small but readable type.

Game play is relatively simple. Players compete to run successful businesses and earn enough money to buy three luxuries, thus winning the game. The basic card deck includes business cards, action cards, and asset cards. The other two decks are the luxury deck and the business-sign cards that correspond with businesses in the basic deck.

The fun starts when players start a new business. Each business in the game has a sign, consisting of one to four cards. When you open a business, you pay a start-up fee to the bank, take the appropriate sign card or cards, and place them in the empty pockets of whichever page is currently showing. If you cover the sign of a business on a lower page, that business can't earn any money. But if your business is on the top page and the game moves to a lower page, *your* business won't earn any money, because it won't be visible from the page in play.

Which businesses earn money and which

page to turn to are determined by dice rolls at the end of each player's turn. Some rolls mean everybody pays taxes, so good money management is crucial. There are also dirty-tricks cards which can help players compensate for bad dice luck.

What makes the game really fun is the sight of the game board cluttered with signs. The businesses themselves are designed to maximize color and humor, with establishments like Sven's Swedish Tacos, Chapter XI Books, and Spider Web Marketing ("We catch 'em, you suck 'em dry").

This is a game just about anyone can enjoy — as comedian Shelley Berman once said about Monopoly, "It's the thrill of wiping out a friend." And because the games go so quickly, it's a good diversion when you have a little time to fill — or, if you've got more time, the friends you wipe out can demand a rematch.

The Vampire Guides.

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Guide to the Camarilla

Guide to the Sabbat

Both guides will be available in a deluxe slipcased limited edition, the perfect companion to the limited edition of **Vampire: The Masquerade.**

Deluxe slipcased guide set
— February 1999 —

Guide to the Camarilla
— February 1999 —

Guide to the Sabbat
— March 1999 —

Vampire the Masquerade

White Wolf Game Studio

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Deadlands: Hell on Earth

Role-playing game from Pinnacle Entertainment Group.

Cost: $30.

Number of Players: Two or more.

Game length: A typical session takes three to six hours.

Learning Curve: The basic system can be picked up in a single session. Rules for special characters may take several sessions to learn. The marshal (game master) will have to study the rules intently before running a game.

Ease of play: The rules are easier to for a player to master than many systems. The marshal will have to put in a lot of work organizing a good campaign, given the system's emphasis on role-play and plot.

Strife Factor: While the game system is reasonably free of contradictions, many of the subsystems are undeveloped enough to be annoying. There are minor rules changes from the original system which can confuse a veteran player, although most of the changes improve the system.

Reviewed by Mike Greenholdt

Six-guns and sorcery, fantasy set in the Old West, has always been a favorite of mine. When Pinnacle Entertainment Group released *Deadlands,* I was intrigued and quickly became an ardent player. At Gen Con, Pinnacle released a sequel, *Hell on Earth.* Both games use the same system, with some modifications, but *Hell on Earth* has a post-apocalyptic setting, stemming from the *Deadlands* game.

In *Deadlands,* a secret society of Indian shamans released the power of the Reckoners on the world, attempting to dispose of white society. The Reckoners lived on fear and gave power to lesser spirits, called manitous, to cause fear in the material world. Enough fear and the material world would become a "deadland," which the Reckoners could enter.

In *Hell on Earth,* set 200 years after *Deadlands,* the Reckoners have succeeded. Fear rules the world, and the Reckoners have entered our world. There's more to the story, including an inspired twist that gives players of *both* games hope for eventual victory.

Hell on Earth handles modern firearms better than any other game system I have ever seen. The weapons are powerful and have a realistic feel, but characters' survival is addressed, as well. The combat system is smooth and flows well, although the game master may find large numbers of NPCs taxing. There's a shortcut NPC-tracking system, but it's uninspiring.

Set in a post-apocalyptic world, *Hell on Earth* does a good job conveying the feel of the situation. For example, the main currency consists of ammunition and military ration packs. Even toothpaste is valuable. The special character classes blend nicely with the setting, especially Junkers and Doomsayers. Junkers are scavenger scientists who build fantastic inventions by coercing mystic power from the manitous. Doomsayers are mutants who discovered how to use radiation to power various abilities.

As a whole, *Hell on Earth* is the best post-apocalyptic game I have ever played and I would highly recommend it to anyone interested in the genre or to a devoted *Deadlands* player. The combination of the mystical with the scientific allows the game greater flexibility in what is or is not believable. This is not to say that the game does not have a few flaws.

Like many nuclear-war-aftermath games, there are almost as many beneficial mutations as detrimental ones, almost like super-powers. Some of the special rules, especially for Junkers and vehicles, are vague or incomplete and cry out for supplements. Given Pinnacle's track record for supporting *Deadlands,* it will probably produce lots of supplements for *Hell on Earth.* Players can look forward to what Pinnacle does with this game.

Victory: The Blocks of War

Wargame from Columbia Games.

Cost: $39

Number of Players: Two.

Designed for ages: 12 to adult.

Game length: More than two hours.

Learning Curve: The basic game can be learned in one sitting, but some of the nuances take a couple games to learn.

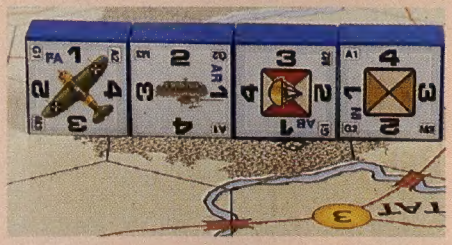
Ease of Play: The rules are easily taught and remembered, so rules look-ups are at a minimum.

Reviewed by Jayson Gralewicz

Victory is the newest release from Columbia Games' Block line. Concentrating on simpler historical games, what makes this line unique is the counters. Instead of cardboard, the company uses wooden blocks with an information sticker on one side, leaving your opponent to stare at a bunch of blank faces, knowing only that something is there, but not what. This also allows each counter to have as many as four strength steps.

Victory is a departure from Columbia's usual subject matter. Instead of covering a historical conflict, *Victory* is an abstraction of World War II-style combat on the grand strategic level. Each step on a counter represents an entire division, two major warships, or 100 aircraft. The maps with their oversized hexes are representational of various types of terrain (islands, canal zones, deserts, peninsulas) and are geomorphic, so that the maps can fit together in many different patterns. The maps are functional, rather than pretty, and can get crowded in a big battle. Some of the hexsides are poorly designated (which affects movement) and may need some house rules as to their actual type.

The turn sequence is the traditional I go/you go, with an economic phase at the end. Players roll to see who moves first each turn, so it's possible to get two turns in a row. Economics are simple: Each major city has a production value and can add and/or create that many new steps of units each turn. Steps all cost the same, and you must use them or lose them. Adding or reducing steps on a block is simply a matter of rotating the block so that the correct number is at the top — so you have a game that requires no record-keeping.



The game itself is a delight. None of the concepts are difficult, all combat is resolved by rolling bunches of dice looking for low numbers, and none of the units are buried under special rules. The interaction of the varied forces is what makes this game shine. Since there are stacking limits, what you send into a battle is never a clear-cut choice — fighters shoot first but aren't good at anything but shooting at other planes, battleships are great but shoot after submarines, and armored corps are the best ground units in the game, but you can only have four.

The game is ideal for introducing new players to the hobby — simple, colorful, and the wooden blocks just feel neat — the closest thing most gamers will ever get to handling a miniatures army. The game never plays the same way twice, and there are no "perfect" strategies that render the game unplayable after one session.

There are some cowflops in the game which keeps it from being great. The box contains four maps and 100 blocks, an adequate number for most games, but additional maps and blocks need to be purchased separately. There are eight more maps in the pipeline at $5 each. And there are more blocks coming soon. Not only can you get two more colors of blocks for multi-player games, but there is a second block set that expands the available blocks by another 50 per side at $12 per set. By the time the dust settles, it will cost you almost $200 to get the complete game.

The game also feels as though it was playtested with the full 100 blocks per side. The scenarios in the basic game are too well-balanced, with each side being unable to decisively beat the other except through incredible luck or extremely foolish play. The abstractions necessary at this scale can get silly — battleships shooting 60 miles and destroying whole divisions, aircraft carrier fleets with only one type of plane aboard, and marine divisions with no anti-aircraft guns. Finally, it may be the ugliest game box to come out in the last 10 years — it doesn't even have the name of the game on the spine! Don't worry about being able to find it, though; the colorized war-photo collage on the cover will make you queasy from across the room in your favorite hobby shop.

While hard-core gamers will be irritated by the simplicity and lack of good scenarios, it does make a nice change of pace. Novice gamers will find this an excellent game.

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Coming in 1998 ...

The Western Empire — Brom Cover — August
Old Kingdom Mountains — Brom cover— Fall
Old Kingdom Lowlands — Zeleznik cover — Fall

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Just one more world in the Palladium Megaverse®!

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MechCommander

Action/strategy computer game from Microprose

Cost: $54.99

Number of players: One, with multiplayer options available over a network.

Game length: With 30 sequential missions to complete, expect to spend many, many hours playing before you finish.

Learning curve: The basics are easy to pick up, but winning the game will require more intensive study of the manual.

Ease of play: Fairly easy, but be ready to pause the game during the tactical sequences to look up specific commands.

Strife factor: Sooner or later, players must face the frustration of a mission they get stuck on.

System requirements: PC with Windows 95 or 98 and a Pentium 133 MHz processor or better, plus a minimum of 16 MB of RAM and a 4x speed CD-ROM drive. Multiplayer options require 32 MB of RAM.

Reviewed by Joyce Greenholdt

Set in FASA's *BattleTech* universe, *MechCommander* puts you in the seat of the officer in charge of a company of BattleMechs, giant walking combat machines. You've been sent to help liberate a planet from enemy forces.

The video sequence which runs when you start the program is an excellent depiction of the action the game tries to simulate. As a MechCommander, you're not piloting a 'Mech on the ground; you're giving orders to the pilots through a sophisticated computer interface. You have to monitor the information coming in from as many as 12 'Mechs, watching out for each pilot as you guide your force towards the completion of its mission.

Your responsibility is split into two areas. Before each mission, you get a briefing outlining your objectives and the threats you'll face, with a strategic map to study. You decide which 'Mechs to send, what weapons systems to arm them with, and which pilot to assign to each machine — subject, of course, to the limited resources available to you at the time. Once you've assembled your team, the action goes to the tactical screen.

The tactical information you get depends on the quality of your pilots and their sensor equipment. You can "see" as much as they can. At first, you have fewer 'Mechs to keep track of and enemy forces aren't too overwhelming, but each mission gets more difficult. If you succeed, you get Resource Points which can be spent on more and better 'Mechs, pilots, weapons, *etc.* If you lose a 'Mech, or, worse, a pilot, they're gone for good. Sometimes it's better to blow a mission, if success means losing your most experienced pilots. Besides, unlike real life, the penalty for failing a mission in *MechCommander* is having to try again until you get it right.

The game's graphics and animation are top-notch, and the program runs pretty smoothly, even on a three-year-old system. You have enough options in *MechCommander* that you'll need to keep the reference card handy, and all but the most accomplished mouse users will want to memorize several keyboard shortcuts. The designers took pains to include details to help you immerse yourself in the game world: Every pilot has his or her own voice, with lots of radio chatter during missions, video briefings at the start of each phase of the campaign, even an animated screen of static interference as your team is sent to the landing zone for each new mission.

All this cool stuff comes at a price, however. In this case, be prepared to hand over huge chunks of your computer's memory to store all these nifty features. The minimum installation requires 150 megabytes of your computer's hard drive, the "typical" installation will occupy 230 MB, and a full installation is 550 MB — a significant portion of even a brand-new home computer's capacity. But even a minimum installation ran well.

There are two other possible drawbacks to the game. Since you must complete each mission in sequence, getting stuck on one can be really frustrating. Prima Publishing has released the official strategy guide for the game, including "walkthroughs" of all the missions — but it'll cost you another $19.95, if you need its help. In addition, the real-time aspect of the game will be a turnoff for some. While you can pause the game in the middle of a firefight to look up a keyboard command or answer the phone, you can't use those pauses to do much more than collect your thoughts and review mission objectives: Most of the command options freeze along with the game. This is, of course, part and parcel of simulating the stress of commanding a military operation, and there the game does an excellent job in its science-fiction setting.

In fact, I think the next step up will come when you can plug in a microphone and give oral orders to the people running around on your screen, just as in the introductory video. Until then, *MechCommander* does a fine job.

Trinity: Battleground

Miniatures game from White Wolf Publishing.

Cost: $59.95

Number of Players: Two or more.

Designed for ages: 11 to adult.

Game length: Minimum of two hours.

Learning curve: Core rules and game mechanics are easy to teach and grasp.

Ease of play: Good, except for special abilities that require frequent rules look-ups and severe table clutter.

Reviewed by Jayson Gralewicz

Tactical skirmish games combine the best features of miniatures gaming (impressive visual effects and fascinating tactical situations) and role-playing games (character development and connected adventures). *Necromunda* and *Gorkamorka* by Games Workshop set the pace several years ago, and *Trinity: Battleground* is very similar in style and execution.

Each player forms a squad of troops with a specific point cost, giving each trooper special abilities and equipment. The players have their squads fight battles against other squads, and at the end of the game each player gets additional points to spend on new equipment, abilities, and troops based upon how well his or her squad did. After several battles, individual figures often gain a reputation. ("This one survived *three* plasma grenades in one game.") It's this combination of tactics and role-play that makes skirmish games a lot of fun, and *Trinity: Battleground* does a good job of bringing them together.

The game components are excellent. The written material has coated covers which will stand up to rigorous abuse and the occasional spilled Coke equally well. The character cards are full-color, although a bit small and very busy. The box includes a battlefield full of terrain: cardstock buildings, walls, toxic chemical tanks, even two geo-hex hills, a thoughtful and useful touch. The plastic figures are well-sculpted and have lots of animation, and there are enough to play plenty of scenarios. The blast templates have directions printed on them, and two 16″ rulers are included. Even the dice are a cut above normal, with a sunken, darkened background on each face and a raised number. You even get a cute little dice bag.

The introductory materials are remarkable. The back side of the obligatory poster is a nicely drawn 22x22″ battlefield, complete with quick-start rules and character sheets — the terrain on the poster even corresponds to what you get in the box. The rule book also includes a step-by-step account of a turn. Two decks of strategy cards balance unequal squad sizes, and each of the five listed scenarios has five additional "twists" to keep them fresh.

Characters all have special abilities, which gives each figure a confusing number of choices each turn and will send players grabbing for the rule book even after several games. The game system encourages hand-to-hand combat, and melees rapidly turn into fights to the death, since you give your opponent a free attack if you try to exit a melee. Another nice touch is the use of support squads, groups of five figures that cost about as much as a low-level character. There are no vehicles or human-shaped fighting robots — yet.

There are a few bugs in the system. The book includes 34 pages of mediocre background fiction. A better arrangement would be to put fiction and scenarios in one booklet and rules in another. That way you could leave the scenario book open during a game and still pass the rules around.

Figures move one at a time over five phases; while this keeps everyone involved, it can also drag out the game. Also, each character record is a 5x7″ card, with two to 10 counters to record abilities and equipment. Add an action chip for each figure each turn, markers for ongoing powers, blast templates, and rulers, and you have a table cluttered with paper and markers. One errant die roll or a sweaty forearm in the wrong place, and the battle is pretty much over.

White Wolf has made an excellent effort with *Trinity: Battleground*. Whether it becomes successful will probably depend on support from *Trinity* (the role-playing game) players, since, overall, *Battleground* is similar to other games already on the market — and how many miniatures games can you afford to get into? For a gamer getting started in skirmish miniatures, *Trinity: Battleground* is definitely the best choice. The introductory rules are excellent, the components are superb, and the price reasonable.

RIFTS

There is so much to tell about **Rifts®** that we don't know where to begin.

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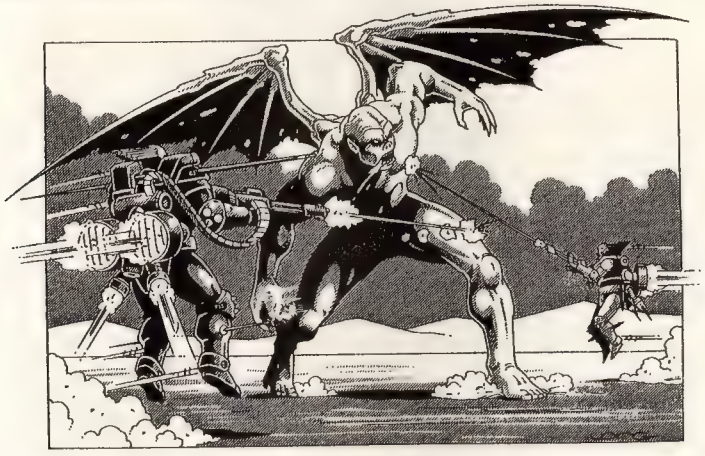

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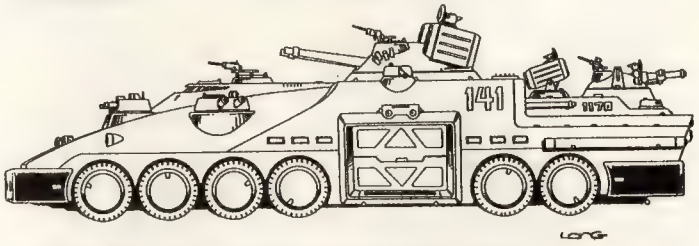

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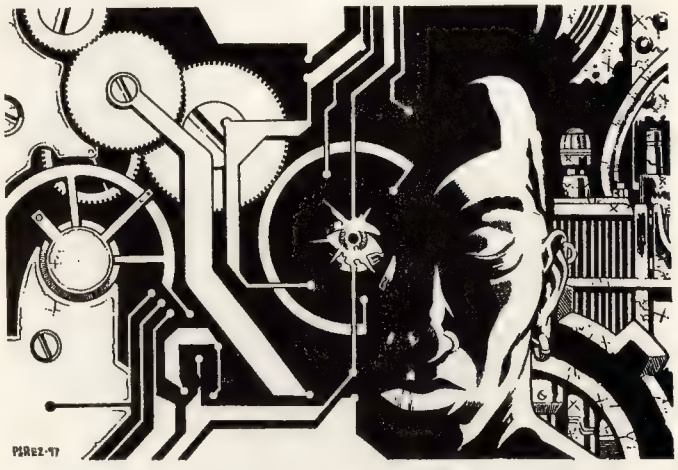

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Your doorway to the Megaverse®

Clan War

Miniatures game from Alderac Entertainment Group.

Cost: $74.95

Number of players: Two or more.

Game length: Variable; allow at least two hours for a good game.

Learning curve: The basic systems are very easy to learn; special abilities and card effects may take more time to use effectively.

Ease of play: The basic parts of combat go smoothly, but keep the rule book handy, especially for the first few games, for looking up tricky maneuvers and special abilities.

Strife factor: Low, though some "house rules" may be needed where rules aren't clear enough.

Reviewed by Joyce Greenholdt

Clan War brings the oriental fantasy empire of Rokugan, from the *Legend of the Five Rings* trading-card and role-playing games, to the miniatures table. The basic boxed game includes an 80-page rule book, another 80-page book listing the various armies and troop types available, reference cards, tactical and troop cards, four 10-sided dice, and 58 25mm metal miniatures. There are enough goodies in the box to get two players started, though they may eventually want to buy an extra set of tactical cards.

Combat is resolved with two rolls using 10-sided dice, one roll to hit and one for damage. Unit leaders, while they generally have better fighting skills than the troops they lead, are not the *ubermensch* that appear in some other systems. Their special abilities are mainly used to improve a unit's performance — making it easier for them to perform a difficult maneuver or change formation, for instance. They work best as part of the unit rather than charging around the battlefield on their own.

There are characters that do operate independently — mainly the magic-using shugenja, who are generally grouped with bodyguards but who are not part of a unit. And some armies may include large solo figures, including dragons or oni (monsters).

Clan War also offers a greater variety of unit formations and choices of maneuver than many other fantasy games. There are specialized formations that allow units to travel faster or increase the number of archers in a unit that can fire on the enemy, for example. Maneuvers allow a unit to charge or countercharge an enemy or conduct a fighting retreat — if the unit's discipline holds up. Discipline is a measure of how much training a unit has — peasants drafted for the battle won't have much, while an elite unit trains every day. This is a separate factor from Morale, which is the key factor in keeping your troops fighting even after they've taken dreadful casualties.

In addition, the game comes with special tactical cards, most of which allow a one-time use of a special ability or special modifier to a combat. Each player gets to form a customized deck of these cards, picking the ones that are especially suited to their own armies. Carefully timed use of these cards can offset outrageous dice luck or push home an advantage to seal the victory.

The figures are nicely detailed, with good facial expressions and poses that have animation without being difficult to integrate into a unit formation — though some of the command figures will need to be positioned carefully on their bases to avoid bumping into other figures in a formation.

There were very few casting defects in the figures, and most had only a little flash to be trimmed off, though some of the flash showed up in places that were awkward to work with.

Considering what you get in the basic box (which, by the way, is made of thin corrugated cardboard — much sturdier than standard cardstock boxes), the retail price, while a big investment, is a bargain. And Alderac's pricing on its additional boxed figure sets and blister packs are also very reasonable for miniatures of this quality.

Mystery Rummy: Case No. 1: Jack the Ripper

Card game from U.S. Games Systems

Cost: $8.95.

Number of players: Two to four.

Designed for ages: 8 to adult.

Game length: 30 minutes.

Reviewed by Michael A. Stackpole

I will admit to being a fan of rummy-style games and to having an interest in Jack the Ripper, so this game is perfect for me. *Mystery Rummy* is an easy-to-learn rummy-style game in which cards' suits pertain to suspects in the Jack the Ripper murders. Auxiliary cards deal with crime scenes, victims, alibis, and a handful of other special cases that allow for serious strategizing by players.

The game plays very quickly and cleanly, and Mike Fitzgerald has introduced a mechanic for voting on the likely outcome of the hand — who will be the Ripper for that hand — which allows players to hedge their plays or maximize their points. The rules themselves are well-written, backed up with concise and clear text on the cards, and, on pages 22-23 of the rules are the key points governing play.

Players score points by producing melds: runs of related cards. Because melds consist of evidence that supports the guilt of one suspect over another, more evidence played concerning one suspect strengthens the case that he is, in fact, the Ripper. A player who voted for the chosen Ripper adds 10 points to his score. Also, all points pertaining to the Ripper are doubled. Careful play and even more careful analysis of other players' actions allow a shrewd player to score lots of points.

Alibi cards can skew things, since an alibi for a suspect takes all of his points out of play. The Ripper Escapes card, if successfully played, leaves players with points only for victims and crime scenes, while giving the person playing it a whopping 35 points.

Despite cards that introduce new mechanics to rummy, the game is simple to learn. By the third hand, players will have a command of the basics, and by the end of the first round the major concern is figuring out how to pump a hand score into the 40s or higher.

The game art is suitably Victorian. The Ripper trappings are fun, especially if players have any interest in that area. The "Case No. 1" implies more games in the series, but finding more historical cases to support the line could be tough. Few have the cachet or widespread notoriety of the Ripper case.

That's a minor quibble with what is arguably the best and freshest card game of the year. It's fast, fun, challenging, and it's one of those games where, when you put together a big scoring play, you get to grin all over the place. The only reason not to buy this game is if you already have more fun than you can handle in your life.

Maul of America

Board game from Jolly Roger Games.

Cost: $35

Number of players: Two to six.

Designed for ages: 8 to adult.

Game length: 15 minutes to 2 hours.

Learning curve: The rules are simple and the game is very easy to play, even for very young people.

Reviewed by Lester Smith

What is it about zombies in a shopping mall that we find so entertaining? That's what this game is all about, so naturally it draws attention. One player controls a horde of zombie pawns, while the others take the roles of shoppers trying to escape the zombie-infested mall. If the zombies prevent the shoppers from escaping before two hours have elapsed (yes, you'll need a timer), the zombie player wins. Otherwise, the first shopper to escape wins.

Before a shopper can leave, he or she must collect either four different types of equipment (weapon, ammunition, first-aid kit, and food) or seven items of any type. To collect equipment, shoppers must search special spaces on the board.

The game contains an eight-page rulebook, 30 pawns for shoppers and zombies (with stickers to decorate them), three perforated decks of cards, four double-sided maps, and two six-sided dice. The text throughout is amusing, with humorous slogans and quotes on the maps and cards. The first few times, much of the fun is in reading these.

Unfortunately, the quality of the components leaves much to be desired. In a box this size, players naturally expect mounted map boards, but these are merely paper, done in boring, flat colors. The playing cards come as perforated paper sheets, sure to wear out quickly. The rulebook is plain black-and-white, typeset in the most mundane fashion imaginable. The illustrations on the pawn stickers are less than impressive, and their coloring is simply awful. Even the box cover art and graphic design are marginal, at best.

Worse, just a game or two reveals large holes in the rules, mainly having to do with card effects. For example, as a shopper, it's easy to win by holding a "Scene Change" card until you have your four items, then use it to pop over to the exit and waltz right out the door. There's virtually nothing anyone else can do to stop you. Even if zombies block the exit, a judicious choice of weapons mows them down without slowing you much. Of course, the fact that the zombie player can mass his or her forces around the exit in the first place makes for a pretty boring game, anyway.

Maul of America is way too little bang (and too much box) for the buck. If you're craving zombie action, dig up a copy of the *Army of Darkness* board game instead.

In the grim darkness of the far future
there is only war.
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Guidelines for giving games

By Joyce Greenholdt

Games you can take home to mom

Every family has its own traditions, especially when it comes to family gatherings. Large communal meals tend to be a staple at such get-togethers. Afterward, some families gather around the TV or just sit and talk, as they slowly sink into a digestive stupor. Other families clear the table and drag out the poker chips or some boardgames; they may be going strong far into the wee hours.

There has been a resurgence in family games within the hobby-game industry in the last year: easy-to-learn, quick-playing games suited to a wide range of ages and tastes. Many also have concepts or more sophisticated strategies designed to appeal to a seasoned gamer, as well.

Fantasy fans? How about Iron Crown's upcoming *Orcs and Trolls* card game or Avalon Hill's *Titan: The Arena*?

Mystery lovers and puzzle-solvers might enjoy R&R Games' line of treasure-hunting boardgames, including *Riddles & Riches,* which uses a 3-D game board to represent a mansion filled with hidden treasures.

How about high finance? Iron Crown is importing an abstract finance game called *Shark* this season, and there are any number of stock-market and other money-making simulations, some of them classics in their own right.

Wizards of the Coast has a line of family card games that combine the need for strategy and speed in play: *Twitch,* especially, gets more hilarious the later in the evening it's played. In Iron Crown's *Fluxx* card game, the rules change with every card played, and whimsy is the order of the day.

You can dig for fossils, pilot a Mississippi paddleboat, race futuristic cars, or battle for control of a medieval kingdom, if you explore some of Rio Grande's line of board games.

Chess variants abound, from Steve Jackson Games' *Knightmare Chess* to the four-player chess-based boardgame *Bosworth* from Out of the Box.

And if your players range widely in age, a new game called *Sagarian* offers players of all skill levels and ages the chance to win. It combines trivia, riddles, tongue twisters, and physical challenges ("Advance 3 if you can touch your elbows together behind your back"), along with a certain amount of pure luck.

Not only do these kinds of games make great gifts for non-gamers, you may want to get a couple for yourself. Quick games are a great way to pass the time when you're waiting for someone in your gaming group to arrive, and you can always take them with you the next time you go home for a visit — or take them out when family comes to visit you!

Gateway games

There are so many different games in every category that it's hard for a newcomer to the hobby to find a beginning-level game without assistance.

The best entry-level games introduce new concepts of rules and strategies in a clear, easy-to-understand manner, can be played without frequent interruptions to look up rules, and still provide enough challenge to engage a more experienced gamer who might be playing with a novice. These "gateway games" are not always easy to come by.

Role-playing games, for instance, are easier to pick up by joining a group of experienced players who can help the newcomer develop role-playing skills and rules knowledge. There are rules systems that are designed to be easier for first-time players to get the hang of — such games as TSR's new *Marvel Superheroes Adventure Game* or West End Games' *Hercules & Xena Role-Playing Game* might appeal to fans of the comics or the TV shows which inspired them.

If new players get help from veterans, they may get hooked by more complex games with settings that appeal to their interests. Such licensed games as *The Babylon Project* from Chameleon Eclectic or genre games like White Wolf's World of Darkness horror line and the Old (weird) West of Pinnacle Entertainment's *Deadlands* provide new players with familiar concepts — the shootout at high noon, the world of a popular TV show — making it easier to pick up the rest.

Of Gods and Men

Fantasy role-playing game from Non-Sequitur Productions.

Cost: $25. Also available: A game-master screen ($10) and *Cults and Conspiracies I* ($18) sourcebook.

Also Available: *Of Gods and Men Gamemaster Screen* ($10) with more cards and a beginning adventure. details several groups, individuals, and new skills to be used in a fantasy campaign.

Number of players: Two or more.

Game length: Several hours per session.

Learning curve: Slightly more difficult than average, even for a role-playing game.

Ease of play: The rules are complex enough that players will have to reference them often, from character generation to combat encounters.

Reviewed by Lester Smith

As my grandfather would say (if my grandfather were a role-player), "New fantasy role-playing games have a hard row to hoe." The competition fierce, the old guard firmly entrenched, and the audience jaded, so that newcomers are naturally treated very harshly. Into this hostile arena, Non-Sequitur has launched *Of Gods and Men.*

The title refers to the game's backstory, in which the gods who created the world and its races warred among themselves and abandoned the world. Now, after a long Dark Age, new heroes (the player characters) are beginning to arise with hints of godly powers.

The book spans 328 pages, plus six sheets of perforated "Divine Power" cards. The art inside and out runs from OK to excellent, and the layout is reasonably polished. A closer look at the text reveals that the game tends toward complex rules, with lots of dice modifiers and special cases. Most fantasy role-players seem to want a system that bears some study; this one won't disappoint them. It is more a case of richness of detail than fussiness of mechanics.

The game is packed with skills, many with interesting uses and descriptions. Purchase of those skills is influenced by the cultural background players choose for their characters. When it comes to magic, there are 17 different types (122 pages total), from hedge magics like herbalism and alchemy to major magics like elemental powers and necromancy. The rules for casting are rich and complex enough to allow for interesting battle decisions. For example, spell casters have the option of straining to use spells beyond their normal ability, at the risk of severe magical backlash.

Not surprisingly, the combat rules are extensive as well, with attack rolls, defense rolls, damage rolls, break-sever rolls, and energy expenditure to represent character weariness, plus two different types of hit points (body points and dodge points), weapon speed factors, movement modifiers, and critical hit charts. Armor reduces damage by a ratio (an unusual concept, though workable here), but it also penalizes dodge rolls. Again, players who like complexity should find this one satisfying.

The game-master section is also respectable, with plenty of instruction, advice, and extensive resources concerning such things as mystical items and well-described monsters.

Where the game sags is in its fictional history and its "Divine Power" cards. The backstory rambles and doesn't provide a clear focus for play. Frankly, the game could do just as well without it. The cultural descriptions serve as better background material. As for the "Divine Power" cards, in our play they proved to be far too limited in use, too weak in power, and too abstract in description to add anything to the game. Considering that they are a feature element of the package, that is disappointing.

All in all, however, if you are in the market for a fantasy game, *Of Gods and Men* deserves serious consideration. It might be just the thing you have been looking for.

What to get the gamer who has all the rules

But suppose you know what games your recipient likes but you don't know what he or she already has. Don't worry — you've still got plenty of options.

Of course, the easiest thing of all is to ask that person, "What would you like for your [*fill in the occasion*] gift?" Unless, of course, the gift-giving itself is meant to be a surprise. A gift certificate from the local game store is also a good option.

But if you want the challenge of finding something that will make their eyes light up when they open the package — well, most types of games have accessories. Some will almost always be welcome — miniature painters, for instance, can run through 5x0 and 10x0 size detailing brushes at an appalling rate. Role-players can never have enough dice (especially if the cat likes to play with any that are left unattended on the table). Shiny transparent dice, cool blended-color dice, marbelized or opalescent dice, tiny dice in their own storage tubes for easy transport to conventions, great big dice that — well, they just look cool, even if they'd dent the table if you actually rolled them. And they can make great game props, too.

("This sheet of paper represents the room you're in. These little six-siders are the party members. And this [*lowering the fist-sized die to the table*] is the ancient dragon that was hiding behind the false wall. You'll notice it's between you and the exit." Evil laughter is optional.)

Some things (like huge dice) are cool to have, but gamers might not buy them for themselves — they're spending their money on the rules and other items necessary for playing their game.

Miniatures gamers, for instance, have to buy their games, their figures, and the paints, brushes, glue, and other tools needed to make them look impressive on the playing table. After all that, sometimes the only thing they can afford to store and transport their magnificent army is the cardboard box it came in. Several manufacturers offer plastic foam-lined miniatures storage boxes in a wide range of sizes and prices.

And, once you've got a great-looking army, what could be better than having great-looking scenery on the table to go with it? Again, there are many companies that offer scenery in differing scales, materials, and price ranges: polystyrene hills, plaster and resin buildings or dungeon corridors, even huge castles and futuristic fortifications. For someone who enjoys modeling scenery, several companies offer kits and foam-sculpting tools.

Storage is also an issue for gamers who enjoy trading-card games. Binders with nine-pocket plastic pages, decorated boxes for storing entire decks, and individual card protectors can all come in handy. There are also many kinds of scorekeeping devices available, from bags of colored glass beads to cast-pewter sculptures with a counter built in. And if you know which game your recipient plays, booster packs from the latest expansion will probably be greeted with joy.

Then there's the possibility of a new supplement for a game your recipient enjoys or even a brand-new game of a type or genre he or she likes. There are far too many possibilities to cover in the space we have here — but the folks at your local game store should be able to help you discover the perfect gift.

Star Trek: The Next Generation

Role-playing game from Last Unicorn Games
Cost: $35.

Learning curve: The system is easy to learn. Character generation is the most complicated part, but go through it once and you've learned it.

Reviewed by John Jackson Miller.

If you're like most gamers, your first reaction to the announcement this spring that Last Unicorn Games had acquired the role-playing game rights to the *Star Trek* universe was: "Who?" A few knew Last Unicorn from its *Aria: Canticle of the Monomyth* role-playing game and *Heresy* trading-card game. Their reaction — and the second reaction of the previously mentioned majority — was likely: "It's about time."

There hasn't been a role-playing game set in the *Star Trek* universe since FASA's 1980s effort, which predated *Next Generation* and most of the movies. There was Task Force's *Prime Directive,* tied in through its *Star Fleet Battles* license, but never has any system attempted to embrace the entire *Trek* spectrum, from Memory Alpha to Nagus Zek. Last Unicorn's release of the *Next Gen* core rules — with plans for *Deep Space Nine*, the original series, and *Voyager* rules in the future — will span the whole milieu for the first time in role-playing games.

And Last Unicorn has produced an exceptionally sharp package for the *Next Gen* core rules. If the game itself isn't particularly exceptional, well, it probably doesn't have to be. The milieu is the message here.

The basic rules engine, based on Last Unicorn's Icon System, ought to be familiar to players of West End Games' *Star Wars* role-playing game. It's feat rolls and mulligans for dinner, folks — only here it's "Courage" points adjusting the more heinous miscues of the dice rather than The Force. Ranged combat, computer research, starship repair — all are boiled down into die rolls determined by core attributes and adjusted by skill levels. It's *possible* to get more technical in combat — the company even plans to produce miniatures — but you get the impression the designers really weren't confident players would be interested. There isn't a chart or map in the book depicting line of sight, grid mapping, greenade weapon scatter diagrams — features customary in systems that emphasize fire and movement. Here, the (role-) play's the thing.

One of the game's strongest and weakest points, character generation gives this game much of its personality. Unlike similar games, in which you'd select your race and your character class and be off, here, those are only the starting points in a process that requires players to determine what happened to them during their childhoods, their Starfleet Academy study, their cadet cruise, and, optionally, previous missions. It's a system for credibly determining what additional skills, advantages, and disadvantages your character has. While it adds about 30 minutes per player to your start-up time, it's worth it to have a richer tapestry to work with. This way, you'll know your character's "Bloodlust" disadvantage is the direct result of a bad experience with, say, the Romulans on his first mission — the mission that also got him to his current rank.

Notation of the skills and specializations is a *big* pain in the neck. Your character may have two levels of basic skill in "Energy Weapon" and four levels in a specialization within that skill, such as "Phaser Rifle." But rather than a notation like "Energy Weapon 2 (Phaser Rifle 4)," the authors have opted for the cryptic "Energy Weapon (Phaser Rifle) 2 (4)." It'd be a small annoyance if the reference wasn't central to just about every activity in the game. It simply doesn't read right.

Another strong point, the core volume provides plenty of details on the Federation and its members, neighbors, and history. Last Unicorn does a good job of summarizing the *Trek* world as it was by the last year covered by the TV *Next Gen* — and part-time fans of the series should find the history presented here enlightening.

Many will carp, however, at the careful omission of many concepts and characters not central to *Next Gen*. For example, Bajorans as potential characters clearly have been saved for the *Deep Space Nine* release — along with information about the Dominion, runabouts, Trills, *etc.* It's understandable Last Unicorn wouldn't want to duplicate information in later volumes, but it will certainly strike the player wanting to draw from the rest of the *Trek* tableau today as inconvienent.

As stated, the rule book is one of the best-*looking* volumes ever to come from outside the major game manufacturers. With 300+ glossy full-color pages, one wonders what, if anything, on the designers' wish list didn't see print. Photos from the TV series abound, although there seem to be more screen captures than stills, and the designers sometimes really reach to find an example of what they're describing. (Here's a Centauran. Or the back of his head, anyway ...)

Ironically, this photo parade doesn't necessarily provide much enlightenment about the game. No captions are provided, and, as mentioned above, maps and diagrams of key game locales are nowhere to be found. And, while the adoption of the *Trek* computer motif throughout for styling pages and charts is both appealing and consistent, it's a bear reading some of the wider text pieces on dark backgrounds.

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GameTime

The Buyer's Guide to Board, Family, and Strategy Games

Here are some of the major board, family, and strategy game releases currently scheduled for release from November through January. The release months listed are only tentative and subject to change, as are the manufacturers' suggested retail prices. At the end of all four *Buyer's Guide* sections, you'll find a list of everything featured in this issue of *GameTime*, which you can use to keep track of the games you're interested in. You can even take a copy to your local retailer with the games you want marked, so that he or she can order them for you as they become available.

Advanced Primate Entertainment

Anathema, $20, Dec. A stand-alone card game, for two to four players. In Anathema, inspired by the Salem witch trials, players take the part of a witch, cursing opponents, casting spells, summoning familiars to do their bidding, and trying to avoid being cursed by other witches. Above all, they must avoid accusation and trial — the penalty for witchcraft is death. Comes with 110 cards, 50 wooden counters, four 10-sided dice, a rule book, and 6-sided dice.

Cheapass Games

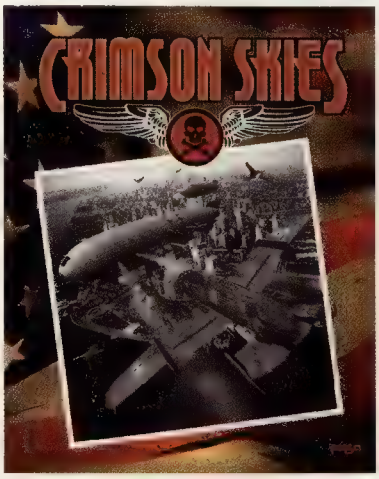
Starbase Jeff, $6, Nov. A tile-building board game set in outer space, where players are contractors, competing for building contracts on a growing station. The more you risk, the more you can win. A 20-minute game for 2-4 players. Play money not included.

Component Game Systems

Star Trek: Deep Space 9: The Board Game, $39.95, Nov. The Federation, Cardassians, Maquis, and Dominion vie for control of Deep Space 9 and the Bajoran Wormhole in this customizable board game. The core set contains enough material for four players and is compatible with the company's other science-fiction customizable board games. For ages 8 and up.

Star Trek: The Next Generation: The Board Game, $39.95, Nov. The Federation, Klingons, Romulans, and Ferengi vie for economic, political, and territorial supremacy in this customizable board game for ages 8 and up. Players form a different board each time they play. The core set contains enough material for four players, including control sheets, map pieces, tokens, cards, dice, and rulebook. The game is designed to be compatible with the company's other customizable science-fiction board games.

FASA



Crimson Skies, $35, Nov. A fast-playing air-combat board game for two or more players, using 3-D playing pieces. The game is set in an alternate 20th century where the United States has split into numerous small countries. Zeppelins haul cargo and passengers across the continent, preyed on by pirates and protected by privateers. Players pilot their own fighters, gunships, or bombers in the service of national militias. The game allows players to design their own aircraft.

Iron Crown Enterprises

Pyramidis, $25, Oct/Nov. A strategy boardgame for two to four players ages 12 and up. The first player to maneuver five out of eight playing pieces to their appropriate home spaces is the winner. Games take about 20 to 30 minutes.

Shark, $30, Oct/Nov. An abstract strategy game for two to six players. Players are cast as financial sharks of the business world, each with the goal of making their own fortune while bringing financial ruin to their opponents. Playing time is 1 to 2 hours; designed for ages 12 and up.

Marvel Comics

Battlebooks, $3.99 each, Nov. Comics creator Billy Tucci worked with game designer Al Leonardi to adapt Leonardi's *Lost Worlds* system to a super-hero combat game. Battlebooks are the result. Each comic-book-sized, 24-page color book features a different Marvel character. Each player needs his or her own copy of a *Battlebook* to play. Marvel's first *Battlebook* releases are: *Captain America, Citizen V, Elektra, Iron Man, Spider-Girl, Spider-Man, Thor,* and *Wolverine.*

Mayfair

Empire Builder Revision, $35, Nov. The classic train game gets a facelift. Changes include conversion to the *North American Rails* map and its corresponding loads.

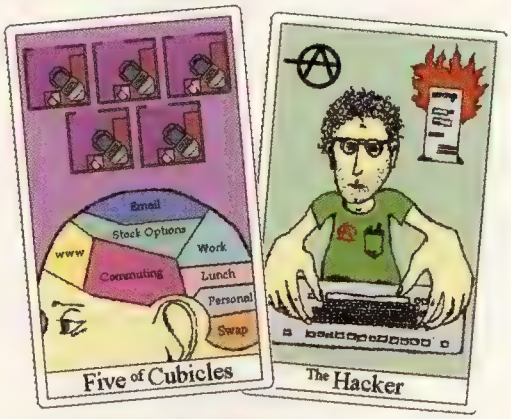
Settlers of Catan:

Cities & Knights, $25, Nov. Attacking barbarians force the colonists of Catan to build an army of knights for protection. In addition, players compete to build the three great metropolises of Catan, each worth two additional victory points. The new challenges in this expansion make for a longer game. Not compatible with the German edition.

Seafarers 5-6 Player Expansion, $15, Nov. Add two more players to your Seafarers game. Contains components for two additional players as well as new scenarios. Not compatible with German editions. Ages 10 and up.

Steve Jackson Games

The Silicon Valley Tarot, $19.95, Dec. A tarot game for the computer age, created by Thomas Scoville.



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GameTime

The Buyer's Guide to Role-Playing Games

Here are some of the major role-playing game releases currently scheduled for release from November through January. The release months listed are only tentative and subject to change, as are the manufacturers' suggested retail prices. At the end of all four *Buyer's Guide* sections, you'll find a list of everything featured in this issue of *GameTime,* which you can use to keep track of the games you're interested in. You can even take a copy to your local retailer with the games you want marked, so that he or she can order them for you as they become available.

Alderac Entertainment Group

Legend of the Five Rings:

The Lesser of Two Evils, $9.95, Dec. In this 48-page adventure module, Lord Yasuki Rama has been accepting illegal tribute and taxes from a shrine on the outskirts of the Shadowlands. Now the shrine and its inhabitants need his help — but revealing his secret will ruin him. He must turn to the players for help.

Twilight Honor, $9.95, Dec. An adventure for veteran samurai. Players join the Crab army on the Shadowlands wall, an opportunity to test their mettle along with the Guardians of the Empire.

Walking the Way, $19.95, Dec. This 156-page hardcover supplement for *Legend of the Five Rings* contains new spells and other minor magical abilities, as well as the secrets of Rokugan's Shugenja.

Way of the Phoenix, $14.95, Nov. The secrets of Rokugan's most powerful Shugenja are revealed in this 126-page sourcebook. Includes new spell rules, rules for magic duels, a new Void Magic school, new advantages and disadvantages for Phoenix Clan characters, and the history of the Tao of Shinsei and the Phoenix Clan.

Way of Shadow: The Ninja Investigations of Kitsuki Kaagi, $24.95, Jan. Dragon magistrate Kitsuki Kaagi spent his life searching for the truth. When he stumbled into Rokugan's deadly ninja, he got what he wanted. *Way of Shadow* is the second in a series of hardcover game-master books. As game masters read of Kaagi's investigations, they'll find notes and maps in the sidebars showing them how to turn the adventures in Kaagi's journal into their own ninja campaigns. 156 pages.

Basement Games

Forge: Out of Chaos: *Tales That Dead Men Tell,* Dec. The second adventure for Basement's new role-playing game. Everyone is looking for the Black Book of Kyle Luisti, a notorious high-ranking member of the Thieve's Guild. Whoever finds the book first will be rewarded — or murdered.

Chameleon Eclectic

Millennium's End: *World Military Sourcebook,* Nov. An overview of military forces in 1999, from the mercenary-filled jungles of Africa to the devastated wastes of the Arabian deserts.

Chaosium

Call of Cthulhu:

Before the Fall: Innsmouth Adventures Prior to the Great Raid of 1928, $11.95, Nov. Five adventures concerning the quaint hamlet of Innsmouth, Mass. For use as stand-alone adventures or for insertion into campaigns.

The Creature Companion, $21.95, Dec. This book for Keepers (game masters) contains game statistics for more than 100 creatures, including several new creatures, and the field notes of Sir Hansen Poplan. Contains material from *Ye Booke of Monstres I* and *II.*

Dream Pod 9

Heavy Gear: *Technical Manual 2nd Ed.,* $24.95, Dec.

Jovian Chronicles: *Ships of the Jovian Confederation,* $18.95, Nov.

Tribe 8: *Children of Lilith,* $15.95, Dec. A new Fatima appears among the Fallen, gathering them into a powerful force and challenging the Seven Tribes. Will Lilith the Liberator bring freedom to the Eighth Tribe or bring about their destruction? Part of the "Children of Prophecy" storyline for *Tribe 8.* 64 pages.

Dynasty Presentations

Dark Conspiracy:

2nd Ed. Referee's Screen & Adventure Module, $20, winter. A three-panel referee's screen illustrated by Larry Elmore and a 48-page module with material from the previously released *Ice Daemon* and *Nightsider* adventures. The module will also be sold individually for $10.

Eden Studios

Conspiracy X: *Sub Rosa: The Conspiracy Sourcebook,* $18, Dec. In the shadow of Aegis and Black Book, hundreds of other organizations operate. They have their own agendas, ranging from gaining personal power to learning more about the supernatural, to forcing the government from power. *Sub Rosa* includes several new conspiracy types, how they operate, whom they recruit, and how to play them as part of Aegis, as opponents, or as the home conspiracy of player characters. A new character creation process is presented, with new professions. Also, the book contains a conspiracy creation section which allows game masters to create their own conspiracies. A 128-page softcover.

Extinction: Nov. A stand-alone role-playing game set in the same world as *Conspiracy X, Extinction* takes place in the late 21st Century. The Saurian invasion has stepped up, and, while human forces have stalled the invasion to a degree, the war rages on. The game includes a miniatures-compatible rule system, a detailed history based on the *Conspiracy X* storyline, and professions, equipment, and technology relevant to the futuristic setting, as well as an introductory adventure. The initial release focuses on high-tech, action-oriented military campaigns; future expansions will include investigative scenarios and underground resistance campaigns.

Event Horizon

Hong Kong Action Theatre!: *Swords of the Middle Kingdom,* Nov. Expands the fantasy setting of Wulin, based on medieval Chinese myths and legends, introduced in *To Live and Die in Hong Kong.* Contains all the information necessary to begin battling the evils of the Manchu Dynasty, including stand-alone mass combat rules for use with miniatures.

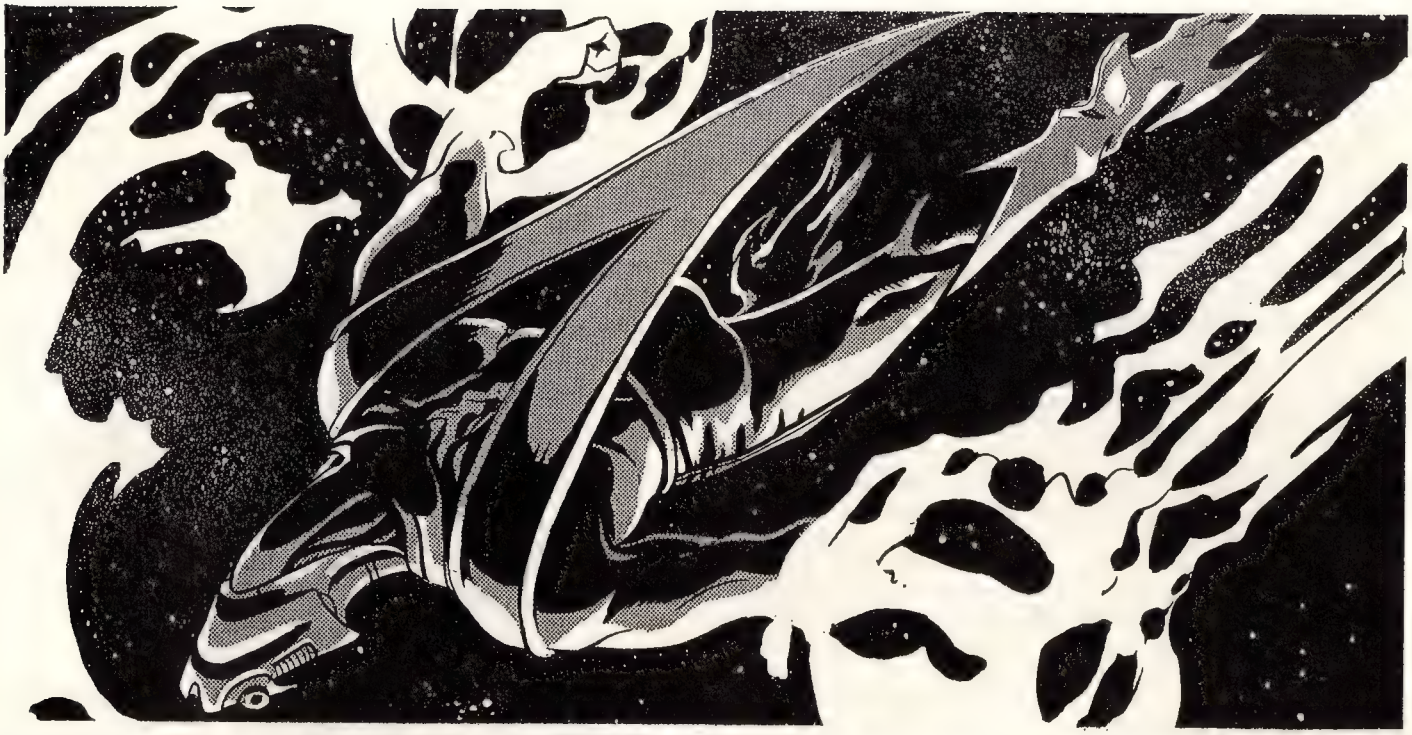
FASA

Shadowrun:

First Run, $12, Jan. A Shadowrun adventure module designed for new players and game masters. Two separate adventures demonstrate each step of playing Shadowrun, including how to teach the game, how to create ongoing campaigns, and hints and ideas for overcoming common problems.

New Seattle, $20, Dec. The revised sourcebook for Seattle in the year 2060 details how the city survived Dunkelzahn's election and assassination, as well as the ongoing mob and corporate wars and the Renraku arcology shutdown.

(Continues on Page 22)



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Unleash your imagination

Role-Playing Games
From Page 20

Hubris Games

Maelstrom Storytelling: *Gray's Journal (Dogbound Edition),* $4, Dec. This 60-page supplement contains five short stories, three adventure scenarios, five new realms for your campaigns, and three pages of new gadgets and affinities.

Iron Crown Enterprises

... and a 10-Foot Pole, $20, Oct/Nov. This equipment guide covers items from the Stone Age to the Information Age, with more than 1200 illustrations in its nearly 200 pages. Need to figure out the price of a chicken in a medieval market? This book is designed to be used with virtually any rules system.

Nightmares of Mine, $16, Oct/Nov. Another non-system specific sourcebook, this volume, written by Kenneth Hite, contains guidelines and tips for creating and running horror scenarios.

Last Unicorn

Star Trek: The Next Generation:

Planetary Adventures, $15, Nov. This 96-page book provides game masters with a variety of ready-to-run adventures set in Federation space. Settings include Vulcan; Minos (from the episode "The Arsenal of Peace"); and Aldea, once hidden behind a powerful cloaking device.

Planets of the UFP, $20, Nov. A 128-page guide to Federation Worlds, containing detailed information on each of the founding members, including Vulcan, Andoria, Tellar, Earth, and Alpha Centauri. Also includes discussions of Federation colonies, neutral systems, and other UFP members, as well as the roles these systems play in the larger structure of the Federation.

Romulan Bridge Crew miniatures, $17.99, Dec. Seven pewter figures: a conn officer, communications officer, science officer, second-in-command, flight officer, tactical officer, and Commander Tomalak from the *Next Generation* cast of characters.

The Way of Kolinahr, $15, Dec. An in-depth look at the people and planet of Vulcan, including details on Vulcan history, society, culture, and geography. Includes new character templates, technology, and ships. 96 pages.

Palladium

Rifts World Book 19: *Rifts Australia,* $16.95, Nov. Dreamtime magic, wild outback survivalists and warriors, wilderness gangs, aborigine mystics, D-bees, alien creatures, strange phenomena, and more. 160 pages.

Pinnacle Entertainment Group

Deadlands:

Boomtowns, $20, Jan. A boxed set with everything a Marshal (game master) needs to build Weird Western towns from scratch, including full-color geomorphic maps which can be assembled several ways to make any kind of boomtown, plus a 64-page book featuring four different towns, making use of the maps. Also includes a free copy of the *Marshal's Log* (see below).

Lost Angels, $20, Nov. This 128-page sourcebook explores the City o' Lost Angels in the aftermath of the events in the *Devils Tower: Heart o' Darkness* adventure.

Marshal's Log, $4.95, Jan. A 64-page, Dime Novel-sized book for Marshals (game masters), designed to help them keep track of all the details in a campaign, from the villain's name to directions to the saloon.

River o' Blood, $30, Dec. This boxed set follows the mighty Mississippi. Includes rules for riverboat gamblers, voodoo, and what can be found in the Mississippi delta. Contains a 128-page book, two 32-page Dime Novel adventures, and a 17x22" full-color poster map.

Deadlands: Hell on Earth:

Children o' the Atom, $20, Dec. This 128-page sourcebook concentrates on the mutie-lovin' Doomsayers of the Wasted West. Learn more about the mysterious Cult o' Doom and its enigmatic disciples.

Hell or High Water, $9.95, Nov. The first stand-alone, 48-page adventure for *Hell on Earth.*

Infestations, $4.95, Jan. The second Hell on Earth Dime Novel adventure follows the continuing adventures of Teller as he investigates a mysterious plague affecting the survivors in the Wasted West.

Road Warriors, $20, Jan. A 128-page sourcebook focusing on the men, women, and mutants who rule the highways of the Wasted West. Includes expanded vehicle rules.

Steve Jackson Games

Authentic Thaumaturgy, $20.95, Nov. Written by professional occultist P.E.I. Bonewits, this book describes how to create "realistic" magical systems for role-playing games and also purports to reveal the "real magic" roots of *Magic: The Gathering.* The book is not a part of any specific game system.

GURPS: *Technomancer,* $19.95, Dec. This world book combines magic and high-tech, but it's not cyberpunk — no netrunning or brain-jacks. It's F-15s versus dragons — and a Cold War fought by wizards in an alternate world where magic and technology both work.

GURPS Traveller: *Alien Races I,* $20.95, Nov. Describes three alien races in detail: the psionic Zhodani, the mercenary canine Vargr, and (seen for the first time) the tyrannosaur-like Drakarans. Includes starship deck plans, vehicle designs, and typical weaponry for each race, as well as rules for creating player characters and lots of sample non-player characters.

In Nomine: *Liber Canticorum (The Book of Songs),* $19.95, Dec. The Symphony controls everything — the Symphony *is* everything. When an angel or demon wants to bring the Symphony more in tune with his own desires or those of his Superior, he uses a Song. This volume includes more than 100 new Songs for creation, destruction, and change. Some are usable only by angels, others only by demons; a few are available even to mortals. *Liber Canticorum* also includes special rules for each Choir and Band and guidelines for discovering lost Songs or creating new ones.

Killer 4th Edition, $14.95, Nov. In *Killer,* each player becomes an assassin, stalking one (or all) of the other players. Squirt guns replace pistols; water balloons become bombs — whatever your fiendish mind can devise. The last player alive is the winner. In addition to the basic game, this edition includes 16 different advanced scenarios setting players up as everything from 1920s mobsters to modern-day vampire hunters, as well as hundreds of gadgets, strategies, and safety tips.

TSR

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons:

The Lost Shrine of Bundushatur, $9.95, Dec. The ancient temple of Bundushatur has resurfaced, and that can only bode ill.

Monstrous Compendium Annual Vol. 4, $19.95, Dec. Collects the best new monsters from TSR's accessories, adventures, and boxed sets from the previous year.

Shattered Circle, $8.95, Jan. The circle of standing stones existed untouched for centuries, until a strange force destroyed part of the circle and broke its ancient wards. Can the players solve the mystery of its destruction and discover what the wards held at bay before it's too late? A 32-page adventure for 1st-level players.

AD&D: Forgotten Realms:

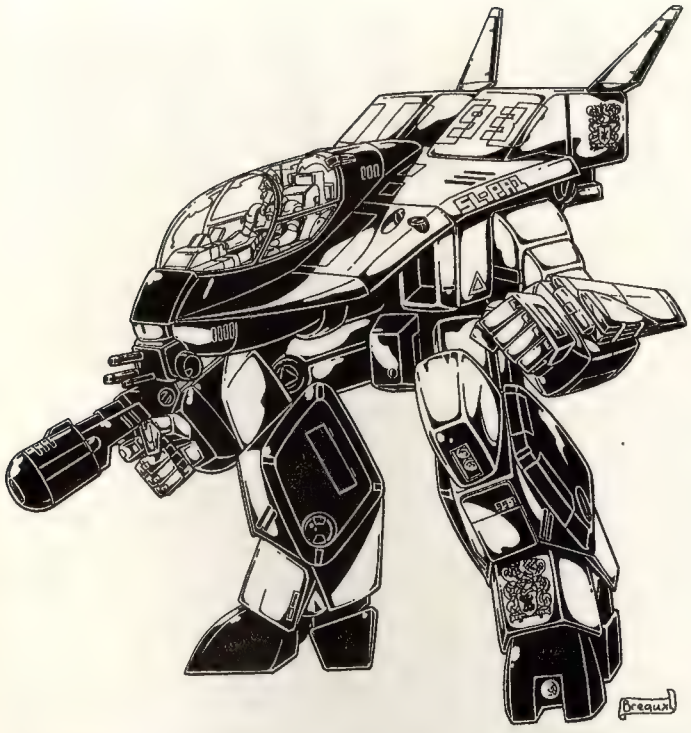
Demihuman Deities, Nov. This final volume in the Faiths and Avatars series features information on the deities of all non-human player-character races: elf, dwarf, halfling, gnome, and drow. Includes information on individual deities, their churches, specialty priests, and church-specific spells.

Demihumans of the Realms, $18.95, Jan. The 96-page book features more than three dozen player-character kits for demihuman races: elves, half-elves, dwarves, gnomes, and halflings. Each kit includes local culture and customs, historical influences and fashion, unique class abilities and proficiencies, social class, and role-playing notes.

AD&D: Greyhawk: *The Doomgrinder,* Nov. The third adventure in the Lost Tombs series brings the players to a monstrous windmill called the Doomgrinder. According to legend, the mill grinds out the world's doom. The Circle of Eight offers a grand reward to those who can turn back its clock.

AD&D: Planescape: *The Inner Planes,* $19.95, Dec. The 17 Inner Planes are the most inherently hostile to mortal life. These realms form the building blocks of matter, from Fire to Water, Ooze to Ice,

(Continues on Page 24)



Robotech® Role-Playing Game series

This easy to learn game captures all the magic and action of the original **Robotech®** television series, plus it offers complete Mecha stats, dynamic Mecha illustrations, cut-aways and close-ups, little known data, and information about Destroids, Veritechs, the RDF, the Zentraedi, war-torn Earth, and Japanimation notes that make these role-playing game books for collectors as well as gamers.

The Veritech Fighter is a giant, transformable robot that can transform from the configuration of a jet fighter to a Battloid towering 50 feet tall (human shaped robot with head, arms, and legs), to a hybrid of jet and humanoid shape. They can exceed Mach 2, offer all-terrain capabilities (including space and undersea), M.D.C. armor, and modular multi-weapon systems, including lasers, missiles, and a hand-held rail gun!

Destroids are giant infantry robots that might be considered walking tanks with the fire-power of an entire 20th Century tank division! Five Destroids compose the heart of the *Robotech Defense Force (RDF)*, with many more introduced in other books in the series.

The Enemy? Alien Invaders! Robotech® is a story of war, discovery, heroism and survival. Earth's champions must fight off three waves of invaders, each more monstrous than the previous.

The Zentraedi™ Fleet: An alien strike force that has conquered (or destroyed) hundreds of worlds during centuries of aggression. The warriors are genetically engineered and programmed for war and destruction. Their arsenal of war-machines includes giant mecha, Battle Pods, power armor, and mile long spaceships with devastating power.

The Robotech® Masters: The cold-hearted rulers and creators of the Zentraedi strike with their legion of mind controlled Bioroids, Terminators and Clone Masters.

The Invid™! Destroyers and transformers of worlds! As much a devouring plague as the sworn enemies of the Robotech Masters™ and the *human race!* They have their own mysterious agenda and a lust for destruction that plunges humankind into a life and death struggle for pure survival.

Robotech® the Role-Playing Game Series

Robotech® RPG: Book One: Macross. This is the basic game book with everything you need to know to play. Rules are easy to learn and fun to play. You play the courageous mecha pilots pitted against deadly aliens and overwhelming odds. The Mega-Damage™ game system, robots, aliens, and science fiction setting makes **Robotech®** ideal for use with **Rifts®, The Mechanoids®, Phase World™** and the entire Palladium Megaverse! Written by Kevin Siembieda and illustrated by Kevin Long. 112 pages; $12.95 plus $1.00 for postage and handling.

Robotech®: Book Two: The RDF™ Manual. A 48 page source book with more data on the RDF and the world, plus RDF combat vehicles and equipment, the *Prometheus and Daedalus* (complete with deck plans), optional rules and timeline. 48 pages — $7.95 plus $1.00 for postage and handling.

Robotech®: Book Three: Zentraedi™. Complete deck plans for five giant Zentraedi spaceships, plus more data about the Zentraedi and space combat rules. 48 pages — $7.95 plus $1.00 for postage and handling.

Robotech®: Book Four: The Southern Cross™. A 112 page source book with *all* the mecha, body armor, weapons and armies of the *Southern Cross.* Plus the Robotech Masters and their legions! $11.95 plus $1.00 for postage and handling.

Robotech®: Book Five: The Invid Invasion!™ A sourcebook packed with the famous and fabulous mecha of *Robotech: New Generation*! Includes the *Cyclones, Alpha and Beta fighters, Shadow Fighter* and the *Invid* and their mecha. 112 pages — $11.95 plus $1.00 for postage and handling.

Robotech®: Book Six: Return of the Masters™. The 1998 expanded edition has 40 pages of completely new material. This source book presents over a dozen new experimental Mecha, including the Super-Logan, Assault Battloid, Super-Alpha, Cyclones, new Bioroids, defense robots, plus a Robotech Factory (complete with floor plans), a moon base, adventures and more. 128 pages — $11.95 plus $1.00 for postage and handling.

Robotech® Book Seven: New World Order: *RDF mecha versus RDF mecha* when a delusional RDF General launches a coup to seize the African Sector in a bid to save the world from itself (but who will save it from him?). Five complete adventure scenarios and scores of adventure ideas. The Africa Sector is described with attention given to *key* political factions, bases, characters and would-be-dictators of Africa. Suitable for RDF or Southern Cross campaigns. 112 pages — $11.95 plus $1.00 for postage and handling.

Robotech®: RPG Book Eight: Strike Force: New, prototype mecha and variations of Destroids, Veritechs, Cyclones, and Zentraedi power armor and mecha! Including the M.A.C. Mini-Monster, Crusader Destroid, Light Insurgence Battloid, Tornado Combat Bike, VF-1X, and others. Plus a dangerous mutant version of the Flower of Life, betrayal, insanity, and adventures. 104 pages — $11.95 plus $1.00 for postage and handling.

Robotech® II: The Sentinels™. *A complete RPG* in itself. It presents the mecha, vehicles, aliens, and characters of the never completed and seldom seen second Robotech animated series! Alien player characters, REF O.C.C.s, new Destroids, Veritechs and war machines, plus the invid *inorganics*! 160 pages, by Kevin Siembieda, art by Kevin Long. $15.95 plus $1.50 for postage and handling.

Robotech® II: The REF™ Field Guide. A must for Robotech animation collectors because it features page after page of never before published *animation model sheet art.* Plus game stats on REF characters, floor plans for REF bases, the Robotech Factory, and adventures. 160 pages — $15.95 plus $1.50 for postage

Robotech® Adventure Books

Ghost Ship. A derelict Zentraedi spaceship or a trap? Find out. Re-released Summer 1998, 48 pages — $7.95 plus $1.00 postage.

RDF Accelerated Training Program™: A 56 page adventure sourcebook for new recruits into the *Robotech Defense Force.* 20 adventures in all! $7.95 plus $1.00 for postage and handling.

RDF Accelerated Training Program™: More data about the RDF soldier, their training and motivations, plus adventures. 56 pages — $7.95 plus $1.00 for postage and handling.

Zentraedi™ Breakout: 64 pages of adventure set in the Zentraedi Control Zone and South America. Suitable for RDF and Southern Cross settings. $9.95 plus $1.00 for postage and handling.

Check out Palladium's web site for more *Robotech*® books and other role-playing games.

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Role-Playing Games
From Page 22

Lightning to Ash. A 128-page campaign expansion.

AD&D: Ravenloft: *Children of the Night: Werebeasts,* Nov. This anthology of short adventures features 13 lycanthropes — cursed with changing forms and bloodlust — along with histories and role-playing strategies. The adventures can be played alone or as parts of larger campaigns.

Alternity:

The Lighthouse, $13.95, Nov. A titanic, mobile space station provides adventure hooks, story ideas, and a refuge for player characters. A 64-page supplement.

Starships, $18.95, Jan. This 96-page volume provides players and game masters with information about the processes and possibilities of spaceship construction. It includes a list of new equipment for campaigns ranging from the Fusion Age to the Energy Age, as well as more than 16 deck plans, from one-man fighters to military corvettes. *Starships* also looks at the properties of drivespace and alternate methods of faster-than-light travel, including jump gates and hyperspace.

Threats from Beyond, $16.95, Dec. An alien menace from beyond the limits of known space threatens humanity in this campaign accessory. The 96-page book details the coming conflict, including rumors, adventure hooks, new aliens, and story ideas for adding threats from beyond to an existing *Star*Drive* campaign.

Dragonlance: The Fifth Age: *Palanthas,* Dec. The first in TSR's new Herald's Lorebook series, *Palanthas* takes a detailed look at Ansalon's best-known city, including the Great Library, the underground thieves' network, and even the cursed site where the Tower of High Sorcery once stood.

Dungeons & Dragons Fast-Play Game: *Wrath of the Minotaur,* $4.95, Jan. This 48-page book is tailored for introducing new players to the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* game, role-playing, and Dungeon Mastering. Includes the *D&D Fast-Play Game,* a step-by-step tutorial for new Dungeon Masters, and an adventure which takes starting player characters into a dungeon to face a minotaur. This can be used as a stand-alone adventure or combined with the upcoming *Eye of the Wyvern* for an extended story.

Marvel Super Heroes:

Avengers Roster, $17.95, Nov. All the information you need to incorporate the Avengers and their foes into your game.

Avengers: Masters of Evil, $8.95, Nov. A 48-page anthology of adventures which can be played individually or as a campaign in which the heroes unravel the schemes of Baron Zemo. Features The Thunderbolts.

A Guide to Marvel Earth, $15.95, Dec. 192-page volume covering the homes, equipment, and secrets of Marvel's superheroes and super-villains.

White Wolf

World of Darkness: *Tokyo,* $18, Dec. Find out who's really in charge of Japan's capital, who's under siege, and who trusts whom (and whether they should) in the struggle of East versus West, wraith against vampire, Kindred against Kuei-jin, and the Technocracy against everyone. Includes information on all supernaturals in Tokyo, eastern and western.

Changeling: The Dreaming: *Land of Eight Million Dreams,* $18, Dec. A new setting for Changeling players and Storytellers (game masters). Western characters can explore the mysteries of the Far East, and players can create hsien, the changelings native to Asia.

Mage: The Ascension:

Digital Web 2.0, $16, Nov. This revised look at *Mage*'s cyberspace explores the Realms, people, and powers of the Internet and includes Storyteller (game master) hints, crossover systems for other World of Darkness Games, and all-new rules for virtual magick.

The Orphan's Survival Guide, $16, Dec. The street mage's companion, with new rules, magick, and guidelines for the down-and-out Orphan character type. Includes inside information on the Hollow Ones and other Orphan groups, post-modern magickal styles and beliefs, character templates, street gear, and survival hints.

Tales of Magick I: Dark Adventure, $14.95, Jan. *Tales of Magick* is a new series of books dedicated to playing *Mage* in a variety of genres and settings. *Dark Adventure* offers new rules, character options, and storytelling guidance for dark-adventure games.

Mage: The Sorcerers Crusade: *Castles and Covenants,* $17.95, Dec. A guide to strongholds, the magi who live there, and the ins and outs of castle life in the Dark Fantastic world of *Sorcerers Crusade.* Includes information on important sites, rules for building and maintaining castles and covenants, and the politics and intrigues surrounding them.

Vampire: The Masquerade:

Revelations of the Dark Mother, $10.95, Nov. A book of vampire myths and history, *Revelations of the Dark Mother* explores the legends of Lilith, the Dark Queen. Learn of the hidden Lilith cults that have existed through the ages and discover a new telling of the *Vampire* creation myth. Not intended for children.

Vampire Storytellers Companion, $14.95, Dec. New rules, abilities, and bloodlines to aid Storytellers (game masters) in the task of world-building.

Vampire: The Dark Ages:

Dark Ages Clanbook: Libellus Sanguinis II, $15, Nov. The undead secrets of the Dark Ages clans of the Tremere, the Toreador, and the Brujah, including new Merits, Flaws, and powers.

Wolves of the Sea, $14.95, Jan. Even in the year 1197, when true Vikings are just a bloody tale of the past, there are still knorrs filled with true sons of Odin and Thor, waiting to loot, pillage, and slaughter. A sourcebook for Vikings in world of *Vampire: The Dark Ages,* covering the heyday of Norse raiders to the years of centuries-old survivors still plying their trade.

Werewolf: The Apocalypse:

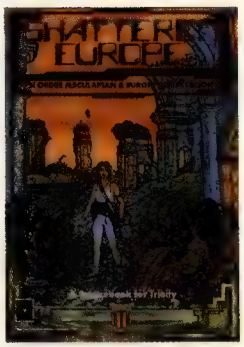
Book of the Wyrm 2nd Ed., $18, Nov. The enemies of Garou have gotten a facelift. This sourcebook includes: updated information on fomori, Banes, Pentex, and Wyrm-controlled cults; advice for Storytellers on how to use the Wyrm and its creatures; and expanded information about Black Spiral Dancers, the twisted reflections of the Garou.

Gurahl, $17.95, Dec. A clan book covering the Gurahl — werebears — including: complete rules for creating and playing a Gurahl character; information about the society and history of the Gurahl; Gurahl Fetishes, Gifts, rites, totems, famous characters; and more.

Rage across the World Vol. 3, $18, Jan. A compilation of two out-of-print sourcebooks, *Rage across New York* and *Rage across the Amazon.*

Trinity:

Darkness Revealed: Ascent into Light, $15.95, Dec. Strife divides the psi orders when they should be united against a threat from beyond the stars. Can you join Earth's psions in time to save humanity and the world? Even if you can, how will you handle the secrets that the invaders reveal? The third and final installment in the *Darkness Revealed* adventure series for White Wolf's science-fiction setting includes three major scenarios that Storytellers may run as a series or incorporate into their own campaigns. Includes source material on North America and Earth's near-space.



Shattered Europe, $19.95, Dec. A sourcebook for Europe in the Trinity universe and the Aesculapian Order, whose psi powers allow them to manipulate the human body and whose members are usually dedicated to healing.

Trinity Field Report: Psi Laws, $4.95, Jan. This "minibook" explores the impact psi powers have had upon 22nd-century society and shows players how far their characters can take things before they must deal with repercussions. Includes material on psionic law and how to break it, a look at different human cultures' views of psi abilities, and plot hooks for Trinity.

INVASION!

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Dark Heaven Apocalypse is a fast paced, easy to learn game that recreates large scale 25mm fantasy battles. The box set contains everything required to play and includes a complete illustraed book that covers all aspects of the game. The boxed set also includes a short novel that chronicles the exploits of two cavaliers as they travel the continent of Adon. Two ten-sided die, eight models and a quick start sheet allow you to begin play immediately.

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GameTime

The Buyer's Guide to Trading-Card Games

Here are some of the major miniatures game releases currently scheduled for release from November through January. The release months listed are only tentative and subject to change, as are the manufacturers' suggested retail prices. At the end of all four *Buyer's Guide* sections, you'll find a list of everything featured in this issue of *GameTime,* which you can use to keep track of the games you're interested in. You can even take a copy to your local retailer with the games you want marked, so that he or she can order them for you as they become available.

Agents of Gaming

Babylon 5 Wars:

Babylon 5 Wars 2nd Ed., $49.95, Nov. The revised basic game includes rules, a map, counters, dice, and fighter miniatures. Additions include ship data and rules for the Nova, Olympus, Thunderbolt, Tinashi, Whitestar, Demos, and Raider Carrier and Battlewagon. The rule book and control sheet pack will also be available separately later, for those who have the first boxed set.

Centauri Fleet Box, $44.95, Dec. Contains one Primos Battle Cruiser, six Sentri Medium Fighters, and 4 Voroban Warships.

Earthforce Fleet Box, $44.95, Jan. Contains one Omega Destroyer, six Starfury Fighters, and three Hyperion Cruisers.

Earthforce ships for Nov: Thunderbolt (Improved Starfury, three per pack), $6.95. For Dec: Nova Dreadnought and Olympus Corvette, $11.95.

Minbari Fleet Box, $44.95, Jan. Contains one Sharlin War Cruiser, three Nial Heavy Fighters, three flyers, and two Tanashi (early cruisers).

Minbari ships, Nov: Whitestar, $8.95; Tanashi (early cruiser), $11.95.

Narn Fleet Box, $44.94, Dec. Contains two G'Quan Heavy Cruisers, six Frazi Heavy Fighters, and one T'Loth Assault Cruiser.

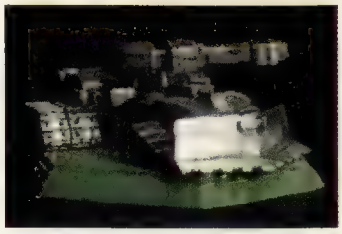
Raider ships, Jan: Carrier and Battle Wagon, $11.95.

Fading Suns/Noble Armada:

Miniatures, Nov: Female Noble, $2.95; Hawkwood Cruiser and Decados Cruiser, $8.95.

Starsiege: Rebellion

Starsiege: Rebellion, $59.95, Nov. Based on the *Earthsiege* computer-game series by Dynamix and Sierra Online and set in the *Earthsiege III* time period. *Starsiege: Rebellion* recreates the battles fought between humans and Cybrids, with information on the Human Terran



Defense Forces, Martian Rebels, and artificially intelligent Cybrids. The box includes a 96-page rule book with color-coded sections for easy reference, data cards for nearly 30 vehicles, counters, 17 10mm (N scale) pewter figures, and four hills from Agents of Gaming's Terrain Creations sampler set.

Imperial figures for Nov: Basilisk Herc (one per pack), $12.95; Minotaur Herc (one), Obsidian Tanks (two), and Talon Herc (two), $8.95; Nike Siege Gun (one), $10.95; Osprey Tank (two), $6.95. For Dec: Gorgon Herc (one); Spartan Bike (four), $6.95.

Cybrid figures for Nov: Adjudicator Herc (one), $12.95; Recluse Tank (two) and Seeker Herc (two), $8.95; Shepherd Herc (one), $10.95. For Dec: Executioner Herc (one); Goad Herc (two), $8.95.

Rebel figures, Dec: Dreadlock Tank (two), $10.95; Emancipator Herc (two), $8.95; Hellion Bike (four), $6.95.

Terrain Creations

Battle Boards (green), $16.95, Jan. 23x23" terrain squares.

Hill sets: Contoured Hill Set (green), $39.95 for 12 pieces, Nov. Sampler (brown), $9.95 for four pieces, Dec. Basic Hill Set (brown), $39.95 for 12 pieces, Jan.

Horde Boards (green), $9.95, Dec. Eight movement trays for any mass-combat game system.

Alderac Entertainment Group

Clan War:

Crab Clan Box, $34.95, Nov. Includes a 64-page guide to Crab Clan armies, new personality and unit cards, and 13 miniatures featuring Hida Yakamo and the Hida House Guard.

Beast Box figures: Fire Dragon, $24.95, Dec; Kyoso no Oni, $15.95, Nov.

Blister packs for Nov: Crab Berserkers (four figures), The Damned (four), Hiruma Archers, Kuni Witch Hunters (four), and Ogre Bushi, $11.95; Crab Clan Personalities (Hida O'Ushi and Kuni Yori), $7.95; Hida Kisada, $5.95. For Dec: Akodo Death Seekers, Lion's Pride (four), Lion Elite Spearmen (four), Lion Heavy Elite, and Ratling Bushi, $11.95; Matsu Tsuko (Lion Clan Champion), $5.95; Lion Clan Personalities (Kitsu Motso and Ikoma Ryozo), $7.95.

Lion Clan Box, $34.95, Dec. Includes a 64-page guide to Lion Clan armies, new personality and unit cards, and 13 miniatures featuring Ikoma Ujiaki and the Matsu House Guard.

Dream Pod 9

Heavy Gear:

Allied Southern Territories miniatures, $29.95 ea.: Assault Armored Cadre (three Naga figures), Jan; Fire Support Gear Cadre (two Jäger figures, one Black Mamba, and two Spitting Cobras), Dec; Infantry Platoon (two Caïman APCs and four Standard Infantry Squads), Jan; Recon Gear Cadre (four Iguanas and one Black Mamba), Dec.

Northern Guard miniatures, $29.95 ea., Nov: Assault Armored Squadron (three Mammoths); Infantry Platoon (two Badger APCs and four Standard Infantry Squads).

Southern MILICIA Army List, $23.95, Jan.

Special Intervention Unit Sourcebook, $15.95, Nov. 64 pages.

Storyline Book 2: Blood on the Wind, 34.95, Nov. 128 pages.

FASA

BattleTech:

Field Manual: Warden Clans, $22, Dec. The fifth volume in the Field Manual series describes the Warden Clans, who have sworn to defend humanity against outside threats — including the Crusader Clans. This sourcebook updates

(Continues on Page 28)

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the Ghost Bear, Steel Viper, and Diamond Shark Clans, as well as introducing four new Warden Clans: Snow Raven, Cloud Cobra, Goliath Scorpion, and Coyote. The books describes the entire military force of each clan, along with tactics, military doctrine, and traditions unique to each clan. Includes full-color renderings of each clan's uniforms and insignias.

The Shattered Sphere, $15, Jan. BattleTech Update 3061. A guide to the people and places in the era of the Twilight of the Clans novels. Includes maps and illustrations of the Inner Sphere and the Clans' current conditions.

Games Workshop

Warhammer:

Boxed Regiments of Reknown miniature sets, Nov: Birdmen of Catrazza, $27.50, five figures; Braganza's Besiegers, $19.99, six figures; Golgfag's Ogres, $49.99, five figures; Leopold's Leopard Company, $34.99, 12 figures; and Mydas the Mean, $19.99, contains Mydas and money cart.

Blister packs, Nov: Birdmen of Catrazza, $5.50, one figure; Braganza's Besiegers, $6.99, two figures; Golgfag's Ogres, $12.99, one figure; Leopold's Leopard Company, $5.99, two figures; and Marksmen of Miragliano, $5.99, two figures.

Boxed plastic scenery, Nov: Warhammer Fortress Wall, $14.99; Warhammer Fortress Gateway and Warhammer Fortress Tower, $19.99.

Warhammer 40,000:

Dark Eldar Codex, $14.99, Nov. A new race follows the release of the new edition of *Warhammer 40,000.* This army book contains the information players need for an army of these space pirates, including background information, special characters, and painting tips.

Dark Eldar Battleforce, $84.99, Nov. An army in a box. Contains 20 Dark Eldar Warriors, a Dark Eldar Raider troop transport, five Dark Eldar Reaver Jetbikes, and some jungle trees for scenery.

Boxed miniature sets, five figures each, Nov: Dark Eldar Wyches, $17.50; Space Marine Devastators, $22.99.

Holistic Design

Combat Zone, Nov. Corrupt corporations vs. crazed street gangs in a near-future urban setting. Basic set includes 30 plastic miniatures with interchangeable guns and equipment, rule book, mini-campaign, 12 dice, counters, templates, quick-reference guide, beginner's guide, and die-cut scenery.

Noble Armada: *Starship Deckplans,* Nov. A kit of maps which can be used for Noble Armada or its role-playing progenitor, Fading Suns. The maps are suitable for use with 25mm to 28mm miniatures.

Iron Crown Enterprises

Silent Death: *Q'raj Void Protectorate,* $16, Nov/Dec. A new House Book describing an Arabic space nation. Includes nine new ship designs (with corresponding miniatures to be released in conjunction with the book).

Pinnacle Entertainment

Deadlands: The Great Rail Wars: *Raid on Roswell,* $14.95, Dec. Scenarios, cards, and counters for recreating the Union raid on the secret Confederate base in Roswell, N.M.

Reaper

Dark Heaven: 25mm fantasy figures, Nov: Adventuring Warrior, Baalbek the Mad (Champion of Jalahandra), Ghoul Warrior, Patrick Rowan (Highlander with Claymore), and Wiglaf (Kjordman Berseker), $2.25; Armored Females with Sword and Shield (five figures), Highlander Archers (five), Highlanders with Swords Advancing (five), Orcs with Spears (five), Wraiths (four), and Yeoman Archers (five), $7.50; Bakarathi Warrior, $3.50; Crypt Wraith, $2.50; Erik Redbeard (Kjordman Warrior), $2.75.

Target Games

Warzone:

Warzone 2nd Ed., Dec. The Second Corporate Wars have turned the entire solar system into one huge war zone. *Warzone* is a 25mm science-fiction skirmish system for two or more players. The second edition uses all the miniatures from the original game. Additions in the new edition include structured armies, simultaneous close combat, rules for fighting underground and inside buildings, and rules for vehicles and flying models. The Warzone 2nd Ed. boxed set comes with 80 plastic miniatures from the Bauhaus and Imperial megacorporations, enough to make up to four 10-man squads for each side, supported by heavy machine gun specialists and led by sergeants, as well as a 48-page background book, 64-page rule book, 96-page army book including all the forces in Warzone, cardstock counters and templates, and two 20-sided dice.

Worlds @ War: Venus, Dec. The first new supplement for Warzone 2nd Ed. features the mostly Bauhaus-controlled planet of Venus. Offers background history as well as current intrigues and theaters of war between the corporations, the Brotherhood, and the Dark Legion. Includes new rules for jungle fighting and new troop types for the different factions, with an emphasis on Bauhaus. The 96-page book has two card inserts containing templates and counters.

White Wolf

Trinity: Battleground: *Operation Lonestar,* $29.95, Dec. In the year 2120, Texas and Mexico are ruled by an organization called the Federated States of America (FSA). During the worst part of Earth's devastation by the Aberrants, this group claimed much of America and Canada, and the Federated States Military (FSM) aims to keep it that way. As the psi orders have increased in influence, they have come into conflict with the FSM. In the Tex-Mex deserts, both sides wage private wars to protect their secrets and expose their enemies, and all the while, the threat of Aberrant attacks on Earth continues. This boxed supplement brings *Trinity: Battleground*'s conflicts to Earth. The supplement includes a 72-page rule book covering the Tex-Mex area of North America and the conflicts between the Orgotek psi order, the FSM, Aberrants, and the Legions; new squads of FSA support troops and special action cards; new squads of Orgotek support troops; the full range of Orgotek psi powers; and rules for powered armor battlesuits (VARGs). The box also contains a 25-sheet character pad for FSA characters, new cardboard buildings, and a hand-cast high-definition plastic VARG miniature.

GameTime

The Buyer's Guide to Trading-Card Games

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Decipher

Star Trek: The Next Generation: *Enhanced First Contact,* $14.95, Nov. Four different packs are available, each holding four First Contact black-bordered limited-edition expansion packs and three new black-bordered premium cards. The majority of the 12 premium cards are Borg-related, but some will aid Federation players. The enhanced packs feature a die-cut front, revealing the lead card in the pack.

Star Wars: *Special Edition,* $9.95 starter decks, booster packs also available, Nov. Decipher is offering two versions of the *Special Edition* starter decks: Imperial and Rebel. Each 60-card deck contains 22 fixed cards to ensure playability out of the box.

Five Rings Publishing

Deadlands: Doomtown: *Episodes 8* and *9,* $8.99 starter decks, $2.99 booster packs, Nov. and Dec. In *Doomtown,* players form outfits to seize control of Gammora, a lawless boomtown. Each episode adds a new set of cards to the *Doomtown* storyline. Designed for intermediate to advanced players.

Dune: *Thunder at Twilight* (Episode 6), $8.99 starter decks, $2.99 booster packs, Nov. Based on Frank Herbert's novel *Dune.* Designed for intermediate to advanced players.

Legend of the Burning Sands: *Black Hand, Black Heart* (Episode 3), $8.99 starter decks, $2.99 booster packs, Dec. The exiled Scorpion Clan from *Legend of the Five Rings* has ventured into the blasted desert known as the Burning Sands, where water is life. Each episode adds a new group of cards tied to the ongoing storyline. Designed for intermediate to advanced players.

Legend of the Five Rings: *The Hidden Emperor Episode 6,* $8.99 starter decks, $1.99 booster packs, Nov. The clans of Rokugan are thrown into upheaval after the emperor vanishes. Each episode adds a new group of cards tied into the ongoing storyline. Designed for intermediate to advanced players.

Rage: Snake Eyes: *Rage across Las Vegas Episodes 4-6,* $8.99 starter decks, $1.99 booster packs, monthly, Nov through Jan. Based on the White Wolf role-playing game *Werewolf: The Apocalypse.* The story arc for *Rage across Las Vegas* will follow several werewolf tribes across the American Southwest, with stops at such places as Hoover Dam, Area 51, and Monument National Park. The card set will include foil-embossed chase cards with an average of one per display box.

Iron Crown Enterprises

Middle-earth: *The Balrog,* $18.95, Oct-Nov. This new expansion is packaged in two 112-card pre-constructed decks: *The Shadow-deeps* and *Balrog's Host.* One copy each of both decks will contain all the cards offered in this expansion.

Precedence

Babylon 5: *The Great War,* $8.95 starter decks, $2.49 booster packs, Nov. This 350-card expansion will focus on the planet-destroying conflict between the Shadows and the Vorlons and will introduce a new class of cards called Contingencies. The expansion will also contain randomly inserted cards autographed by Peter Jurasik (Londo Mollari). Precedence also plans to attach a specially wrapped exclusive game card to every 20-pack booster display box. *The Great War* will be available in 10-card booster packs and in two preconstructed 60-card starter decks (Home Factions and The Non-Aligned Worlds), which contain a sheet of "Mark" counters and revised and updated rules for any number of players.

Wizards of the Coast

BattleTech: *Crusade,* $2.99 booster packs, Nov. The Inner Sphere sets its sights on the Smoke Jaguar clan in this expansion based on the first half of FASA's Twilight of the Clans novel series. Designed for intermediate to advanced players.

Pokémon, Nov. Wizards of the Coast is publishing an American edition of the Japanese trading-card game based on the Nintendo Game Boy videogame just released in this country. Catch your own pokémon ("pocket monsters") and train them to do battle with your opponent's pokémon.

Xena: Warrior Princess: *Battle Cry,* $5.99 40-card starter decks, $2.49 12-card booster packs, Nov. Callisto is back in the first expansion for this Arc System game. Designed for new players.

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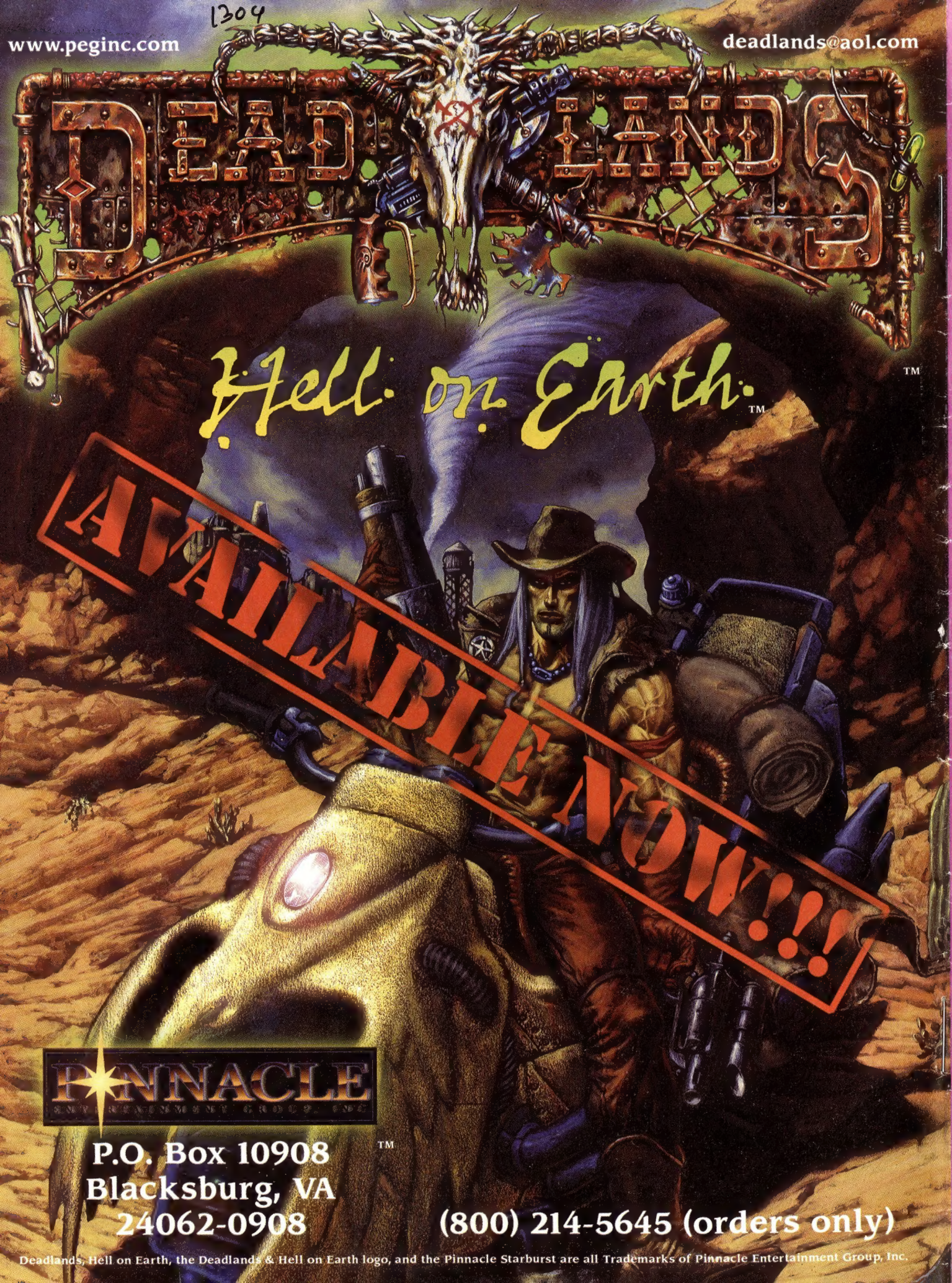

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